

PREACHING WITH VISUALS: A SPIRIT FILLED,
ELECTRONIC STAINED GLASS
WINDOW

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A FINAL DOCUMENT SUBMITTED TO
THE DOCTORAL STUDIES COMMITTEE
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
DAYTON, OHIO
December, 2004

**United Theological Seminary
Dayton, Ohio**

**Faculty Approval Page
Doctor of Ministry Final Document**

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ABSTRACT

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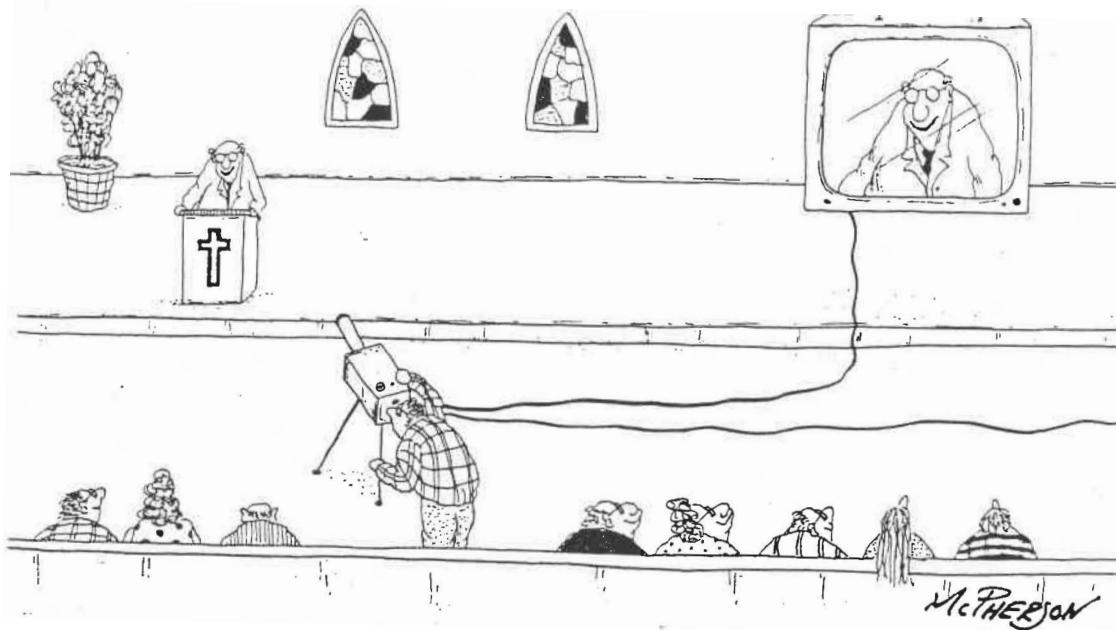
Dr. Helen Wilcox-Evvaraye, Ph.D.

The purpose of this research project was to measure the response and effectiveness of four sermons presented with an augmentation of visual displays by a preacher who increased his daily spiritual devotional time and range for study. A multi-picture PowerPoint presentation was employed; and written surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews measured the response. The result was a seventy-seven percent positive response, a seventeen percent neutral response, and a six percent negative response. It is concluded that persons in congregations similar to this context respond well to a PowerPoint presentation during the sermon by a spiritually disciplined preacher.

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PASTOR LOU BARNESLEY TRIES TO WIN BACK MEMBERS
THAT HE HAD LOST TO TV PREACHERS.

John McPherson, *McPherson Goes to Church*
(Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 1994, 66.

INTRODUCTION

In what areas does the sole pastor or senior pastor of a church touch his or her people the most? There are many touches in many areas of the church such as preaching, teaching, pastoral care, sacraments, administration, and building the kingdom of God both spiritually and physically. These are some of the transformative moments in the church for people who participate. These are the areas where this pastor touches the people in the churches he has served. The author's reason for ministry and his purpose statement are to help people *to grow closer to God in love through Jesus Christ.*

This research project measures the response of a mixed generational congregation to a sermon style that is new to them and includes an interactive visual presentation employing PowerPoint visuals on a projected screen. To enhance the message, the pastor, as presenter, engaged in a deeper spiritual discipline preceding all four sermons presented during this research.

Chapter one details the ministry focus. It includes the author's spiritual background. It expands into his formation as a public speaker using visuals first in his business life and then into his preaching ministry. The context is also presented along with their demographics and composition. These two entities, the preacher and context, converged on this project of the *spirit filled stained glass window*.

The state of the art of spiritual formation and visual usage in the sanctuary is recorded in chapter two, and it discusses what is being done in churches today. Also, some of the various commercial offerings for the church are presented. Since this is a new area, there is not a large body of material. The spiritual component of this project has always been with us, and time honored effective disciplines were used. The significant additional factor in this project was the additional devotional time taken.

The question of whether visual displays are based upon the historical, theological, and biblical principles are demonstrated in the third chapter. It has been recorded throughout the Bible that God has used visual displays and spirit filled people to get the message to God's people. There are many theological views across a wide spectrum, and many theologians and historically effective preachers from across that spectrum have used both the gifts of the Spirit and visuals in the delivery of their oratory with good results.

In chapter four, the methodology is presented where the context associates researched survey questions and developed a questionnaire. This is presented in Appendix A. The context associates also created a random list of people for the focus groups and the one-on-one interviews. This preacher prepared the sermons and outlines; and the visual enhancements are shown in Appendixes D, E, F, and G.

Chapter five explained how this action research project employed a triangulated collection of data employing survey questions gathered from the entire congregation present, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews. The results were averaged and show to be mostly positive at 77%, with 17% showing neutrality, and 6% exhibiting a negative response to the project. This data is extensively recorded in Appendix B. The most significant statistical age group that was negative was between the ages of forty and fifty-five. They indicated in their comments that they preferred a more sedate, contemplative style of worship; but the majority of the respondents indicated they received a more worshipful experience when the preacher was more spiritually focused and visuals enhanced the sermon event.

In the conclusion, located in chapter six, the results confirmed that this was positive experience for those persons involved in the research. There was transformation of this author, the context associates, and the people of the congregation (the context). There is now, at this writing, considerable research and effort to utilize visuals permanently in the sanctuary of this context in an attempt to maintain a more spiritual atmosphere during the worship event. This was a worthwhile and successful project for the pastor, the congregation, and the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Many people attend church, but some do not fully grasp the purpose or nature of their attending worship. In fact, some endure an hour or so of sitting, standing, singing, reading, and listening, but gain very little insight into God or themselves. Sometimes, the most boring, least informative, or least moving part of this hour is the section described as the sermon, though many church goers say this is the most important event in the worship service. This author remembers sitting in many pews on many Sundays wishing he were somewhere else, but endured the situation because of the desire for something almost indescribable within him.

There have been many sermons that were either shouted, which turned off this author's receptors, or so quiet that he almost fell asleep. Somehow the message got through turned off receptors and penetrated even the sleepy brain. These situations should not happen. When God and God's message are transmitted, the message should be full of life and interesting, just as God is. Delivery of the message should capitalize on all of the available communication media to help transform individuals without scaring them or boring them into a comatose condition.

This project is within the framework of the Doctor of Ministry at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, in the program of “Spirituality and the Practice of Ministry.” This program is based on the premise that ministry is spirit based and engaged by a spiritually transformed person. This means that ministry is empowered by a person who allows an all-encompassing God to use that person as an *earthen vessel* who integrates body, mind, and soul by the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul writes, “For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.”¹ That person, allowing God to transform him or her, must continue to seek spiritual formation through disciplines, which will then lead to a more effective practice of ministry. It is also hoped that this ministry will help transform the researcher’s associates, the church, the community, and the entire world for God’s kingdom to reign more fully in the hearts of all peoples.

In the first chapter of the Bible, Genesis 1:1 ff., the creation by God is described in visual terms: light and dark, water and land, plants and animals, and human beings. These are not abstract concepts, but concrete images that can be visualized. Many of the Old Testament prophets used visuals as well, such as Isaiah and the coal touching his lips, Jeremiah and the dirty linen cloth, and Gomer and the prostitute.

In the New Testament, Jesus uses parables to help his hearers, and us in the twenty-first century, to visualize the concepts of God and the life lived as God desires.

¹ 2 Cor. 4:5-7 New King James Version (NKJV)

James Breech in his book, *The Silence of Jesus*, states, “One group [of Jesus’ parables] limits itself to the external description of what men and women do, and I call them photodramatic because they report *visible* actions.”² He further explains that Jesus used these parables to explain the nature of human reality. Jesus communicated these abstracts through visuals, and a key characteristic according to Breech is that Jesus remained basically silent about himself.³ When Jesus employed these visual explanations he was attempting to communicate who God is and what God desires for humanity and the entire world.

The Bible then ends with the Book of Revelation where John, the writer, records God’s visuals by writing, “I saw” or “I looked” twenty-nine times in the New King James Version at the beginning of the various major and minor divisions. God did not just speak to John, but God chose to communicate with him in a visual way.

Jesus, in his time, spoke to an illiterate world, as well as to the many illiterate Christians who came after his death and resurrection. “We must assume, then, that the large majority of Christians in the early centuries of the church were illiterate, not because they were unique, but because they were in this respect typical. The ancient world had virtually no system of education.”⁴ So visuals were used to communicate the good news of Jesus; however, knowledge of these early artifacts is limited.

² James Breech, *The Silence of Jesus* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983), 66.

³ *Ibid.*, 213-217.

⁴ Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the early Church: A History of early Christian Texts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 6.

We find that pre-Constantinian pictorial art is limited to three media: frescoes, mosaics, and sarcophagi.⁵ Many frescoes were lost due to their fragility. “The only pre-Constantinian mosaics clearly Christian in nature are those found in Mausoleum M of the Vatican necropolis. . . . Since Christians of the third century were not building new churches but rather taking over existing architectural structures, it seems unlikely that many pre-Constantinian mosaics exist or that more will be found.”⁶ Sarcophagi, carved as they were out of stone and thus durable, can be found in large numbers. Then “toward the end of the second century, paintings began to appear that could be identified with the emerging Christian culture.”⁷ All of these artifacts were visual and were used to hand down the story of Jesus and salvation.

Not only were visuals used to inform the receivers, but also they were used to touch the emotions, psyche, and soul of the congregation. In the words of Graydon Snyder, “The purpose of the fine arts is to help us to see, to feel, and to appreciate the world in which we live. They are concerned, not with prosaic facts, but with the poetic joy of discovering beauty wherever it may be found. In the landscape, the sea, and sky, the human soul and many another source, the fine arts discover and picture for those of us who would otherwise be inarticulate, the love, the light, the beauty of God so richly incarnate in Jesus Christ.”⁸

⁵ Graydon F. Snyder, *Ante Pacem: Archeological Evidence of Church Life Before Constantine* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985), 31.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁸ Cynthia Pearl Maus, *Christ and the Fine Arts* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1938), 2-5.

Cynthia Pearl Mausin also states, “The use of great pictures in teaching religious concepts rests upon the sound educational principle that a truth which reaches the mind through the eye-gate and the ear-gate at the same time doubles the impression. . . . Psychologists tell us that sense impressions received through sight are of a higher order than those received through any other sense.” For communication between humans, art helps the process more fully than just verbal talking and listening. Maus further explains,

Art does not deal with things as they are themselves. Science does that. Art, particularly religious art, deals exclusively with things as they affect the human soul. . . . Art reaches further into a person more than mere intellect, but it touches the soul and reveals a greater spiritual truth that would not have been possible otherwise. . . . Art is the interpretation of the great eternal realities of life, and as soon as the artist tries to embody the greatest feelings and aspirations of the human soul, he [or she] gets on Biblical ground, for there is no greater interest or aspiration of man [or humans] which the Bible has not treated.⁹

Visual art, then, is used not only for informational purposes, but it is also used to communicate deeper levels beyond the intellect and into the soul.

As Christianity entered the Middle Ages and great cathedrals were built, the populace was still mainly illiterate; therefore these sanctuaries employed visual media to convey the biblical story. In the words of Bernstein, “Throughout the Middle Ages the arts were practiced as direct communication media. The intent was to convey through sculpture, stained glass, and in more intimate works in gold, enameling, and illuminated manuscript the religious stories of the Christian faith. . . . The early windows had as their objective the communication to an illiterate populace of a familiarity with the personages

⁹ Ibid., 6-8.

and acts that constituted their religion.”¹⁰ Montigue Rhodes James in the Middle Ages wrote about a justification of such marvelous windows when he stated that “especially in cathedral and parish churches, where public stations take place, I think it an excusable concession that [our contemporaries] should enjoy at least that class of pictures which, as being the books of the laity, can suggest divine things to the unlearned, and stir up the learned to the love of the scriptures.”¹¹ Stained glass windows have been and are a good use of resources to aid in the communication of God’s story and message more completely.

God, and those touched by the Spirit, have extensively used visuals to convey the messages and communications that God desires humanity to have. Why then in this past century (twentieth) has the written and heard word dominated in the protestant church, and the visual content been made obscure in the United States? One explanation is that the populace present in the church was literate, academic and scientific, and this populace desired their churches to communicate in the same fashion. The generations coming of age demand a more stimulating form of communication in all aspects of their lives, including religious, and so the church should employ spirit filled visual displays. This research project attempted to verify that people do desire both a spirit-filled presenter and visual aids.

Earlier in life, before full-time ministry, one of this author’s tasks as a regional sales manager was to inform inside telephone sales people of new and existing products

¹⁰ Jack W. Bernstein, *Stained-Glass Craft* (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1973), 5.

¹¹ Montigue Rhodes James, “Pictor in Carmine,” (*Archaeologia* 94, 1951), 141-66 found in Madeline Harrison Caviness, *The Early Stained Glass of Canterbury Cathedral Circa 1175-1220* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 107.

and how they could be sold more effectively. These sales meetings were held at 5:00 P.M., after a long day's work. The last thing the sales people desired was to sit through a one-hour sales presentation because they were tired. To keep their attention, the presentation could not be boring, as some sermons are. So this author employed visual images to capture and hold their attention while also conveying a more complete message. This gave an insight into how sermons needed to be preached in order to capture people's attention, and then, hopefully, transform them into better disciples of Christ and help them move into a closer relationship with God through Jesus Christ and be enabled by the Holy Spirit.

To preach using a PowerPoint presentation, this preacher felt that he needed to be able to deliver a sermon without notes. It required about seven years for this preacher to become familiar enough with the Bible, to trust his theology enough, and to be confident enough to preach without notes.

Also, during the past years, this author thinks that people exiting the sanctuary after a worship experience would tell him that his sermon was especially good that day, after he had spent more time in a spiritual discipline in the previous week or had put more emphasis on a visual presentation. These comments went beyond the usual perfunctory and polite salutations at the end of the service. They were genuine compliments coming from persons who did not normally comment on the sermon.

This project coincides with God's initial call to this recipient "to be a *preacher*" since it facilitates and measures the effectiveness and transformative power of the Spirit-led preaching offered by God through this earthen vessel utilizing a visual supplement called the *spirit-filled electronic stained glass window*.

This description is a history of this author's religious life as a Christian and how it affected this project. These things, which are shared, are some of the major events in this journey, but there are many more little things that reinforced these recorded experiences and shaped his ministry and the formation of this project. There are too many coincidences of good happenings in this journey to be mere chance; and they are understood as the hand of God guiding this lamb as he chose to follow God. This journey of faith begins with instruction as a child, a major loss of this author's father, grief and anger, rebellious teenager and young adult, a businessman that slowly over the years learns to listen to God, a conversion experience, a call to the priesthood, a bargaining period, and finally a commitment to trusting God with the four lives of this family. This project is a continuation of that journey as ministry is continued and researched.

This author's perception of his childhood was that it was a normal midwestern childhood in a homogeneous community. He was born and raised in Olney, Illinois, an all white, Anglo Saxon, primarily Protestant town. He lived there in the same house until he left for college. The only *others* in this author's realm were white, middle class Roman Catholic families. During those years he attended the First United Methodist Church, with membership of approximately five hundred. At the age of twelve, he was baptized and confirmed as a member of the church. At the time, this confirmand didn't take these actions too seriously, thinking he could become serious about these matters later when he understood them better. He did acknowledge at the time the existence of God and Jesus as the Christ and this author's Savior from an eternal hell. He did not pay attention or he was not instructed about the empowerment of the Holy Spirit or on the everyday activity of God. He does remember one preacher who shouted so loud that it terrified him, and

another preacher who was very boring. That preacher was at his church for a very, very, very long time.

As a child, this author remembers visuals were used in his Uncle Luke Perrine's traveling evangelistic revivals to keep people's attention. Uncle Luke would visit various churches in different towns for about a week and hold services every night. He would use kinetic visuals by performing magic tricks and relating them to the Bible and biblical principles. His wife, Gladys (Walker) Perrine, would draw a seven-minute sketch in chalk on a blank piece of paper during the service as well. She then would sing a hymn that the artwork represented. As she finished the artwork and put it on an easel, the lights would go out, and a rotating light with dark and light sections would shine on the chalk picture while she sang. After the service, she would give the artwork to the congregant who brought the most people with them that night. When this author asked her why she did it, she said that it was *to get and hold their attention!* These visuals were used in the late 1950's.

On March 21 of 1968 this author's father died. The author was only thirteen years old. When his father died, the son thought God was punishing him for he was associating with an undesirable group of kids, such as teenagers of that age are wont to do. Punishment for his kind of activity was a consequence heard in sermons up to that point. This adolescent became reclusive and an introvert for three years, grieving and trying to discern the direction for his life. During a ten-day hiking trip at Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico, he sat down by a stream that contained a series of pools and rapids. He surmised that life must be similar to this stream of short rough spots and then stretches with smooth water. He didn't connect God with this activity or his own anger towards

God and his earthly father. This author now believes that God in God's divine wisdom has set the world in motion, with all of its catastrophes and chaos along with human's free will. These free choices (will) and the world design interact, developing these rough and smooth spots in each of our lives. This author also believes that God is able and sometimes does intervene on a human's behalf. This is called *providence*.

In the spring of 1976, after four years of college, this writer earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering from Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology. During these four years, he attended only one Christian Bible study at the invitation of his freshman roommate. He was astounded by this author's biblical knowledge because he correctly knew the author as a rowdy, partying type individual. These were the worst four years of this author's life since he did not join or get the support of any group of students. He was still grieving over his father's death eight years earlier, and he probably got stuck in the development stage of adolescence or early adulthood as described by Erick Erickson.¹²

While in college, this author started to write poetry, which is an insightful reflection of his thoughts and emotions at that time. He also took a course in writing poetry while working on a minor in literature. Here are some examples. The poem, "The Race," was written about the writer's worry of dying too young like his father because they both are "type A" personalities.

¹² Erik H. Erickson, *Identity and the Life Cycle* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1980).

THE RACE

I have a race with time,
Always on the go;
Never stopping,
My opponent or I.

I see death
At the front door,
And he has his deputy
Guarding the rear.

If only I had
Enough time to do
All that I desire;
I'll just have to go faster.

April 18, 1974

The last two lines of the poem, "Are You There?" were found on a cocktail napkin, and inspired the author to write this poem. It reflects his belief at the time.

ARE YOU THERE ?

Who are you?
What do you want?
I am here
You are there,
Somewhere.
Questions asked
Throughout time,
But are they ever answered?
If they are,
Where are they?
In the minds
Of men?
Or maybe even
In their souls;
Only those people know.
They can't say
Or explain it,
All they say
Is that it's great.
Maybe he's not there.
Maybe it's an ageless lie,
But as the goldfish said,
"There must be a God,
Who changes the water?"

January 1975

Looking back on these poems, it is clear to this author that death was still feared even though he had accepted the existence of God, yet didn't know God's love, character, or interactions with the world or with humans. Jesus as Christ and salvation were still abstract concepts and their existence and effectiveness still questioned.

During college and the next twelve years, God was not recognized as a significant factor in this author's life. He was busy, very busy, chasing money, power, prestige, and material objects. He had set interim goals for himself that were ahead of his chronological age, and he achieved all the goals he had established. He believed some of the drive for this secular success came from his anger towards his father for abandoning him, as well as a fear of failure.

This writer and his wife, Linda, did start attending church again about 1981. They attended a large United Methodist Church in Greenwood (a suburb of Indianapolis), Indiana. They felt their two children needed a Christian education in a church so they could decide about religion for themselves, no matter what their parents' present views were. The author was grateful to his mother because she had taken his brother and him to church school and worship all of his childhood, whether he wanted to go or not. He had learned the basics of Christianity. Linda also had attended church services before their marriage, and she felt that attending church was a good idea.

During this time in this author's business career, he led weekly training sessions with salespeople of his company's distributors. He learned that visual pictures and data supporting what was said and presented in printed form aided in holding their attention. During a one-hour presentation, up to fifty overhead slides were used. This captured and kept their attention.

In October 1989, this author fully accepted Jesus as his Savior. He had been staying in Lexington, Kentucky, the night before and was driving home on Interstate 64 to Louisville. He was talking to the Lord. He was repenting for his sins and accepting Jesus as his Savior while he was crossing the Kentucky River at Frankfort, Kentucky, and the Holy Spirit answered him and said he was forgiven. It felt as though God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, or someone was sitting in the car with him, and it was definitely an external source. This was this author's major conversion experience. It didn't happen until he chose to accept Jesus as his Savior, not just intellectually but with his soul. He has also learned that all Christians do not have a specific day, time, and place for conversion, but just know they are saved. Some have indicated they grew into that knowledge. The metaphor the author uses of these conversion experiences is people either have an explosive fireworks experience or one that like a sunrise, slowly rises without perceptive movement, but does accomplish the same thing.

A year after this author's conversion, during a stay in a motel room on September 24, 1990, he received an idea from God about a new transistor process that is capable of receiving a patent. God also asked this author to help the Greenwood United Methodist Church, where he was attending, to grow and become alive. He accepted both challenges. He is still working on the patent and has discovered it has never been recorded. At that time, he did become active at the Greenwood United Methodist Church, and did join with others in helping the pastor change a stable and dying church into one of spiritual growth. This author was starting to learn how to listen to God, and how to let God lead his life. Sometimes he listened and followed, and sometimes he did not. He was learning how God interacted with persons on an everyday basis by himself

learning how to pray and talk to God. He has also learned this is not an exact science.

Martin Luther once said that grace is no longer grace when it ceases to surprise us.

On September 7, 1991, God called this author to become a minister. It happened that morning in a hotel room in Detroit, Michigan. He was attending a sales meeting for one of the firms he sold for, and the firm's employees and he had been up until 2:00 A.M. talking about the firm's politics. Approximately daybreak, he woke up and God said to him, "I want you to be a preacher." For about an hour God and he had a discussion concerning the trade-offs of a secular, working life versus a life as a full time minister. They also discussed how he had scratched and clawed his way to the top of his business world, but God reminded him that it had been God who had helped him every step of the way. Finally, he agreed that he should become a preacher, and he came to the conclusion that he would enjoy marrying people, counseling, sharing the Word with people, and bringing the Word to the un-churched. He also felt that his training as a salesman, sales manager, and entrepreneur had given him a very sound base for his career as a preacher because he had given presentations and public reports at meetings on a regular basis throughout his career as well as honed his administrative skills.

An extended conversation ensued when this candidate informed his wife, Linda, that he had discerned a *call* from God to be a preacher. She said that God had not called her, but she followed him into ministry *kicking and screaming* as it has been described. The voice this author heard during his *call* was the same voice he heard at his conversion, the patent idea experience, and through all of the other times he has listened to God. The voice is inside this author's mind, and not truly audible to him or anyone else. He believes it is like *the whisper* Elijah heard or that *still small voice* which is recorded in

many places in the Bible. And as Linda has said, she did not hear God speak to her, but has learned that God communicates to her through feelings. She is able to feel if something is in tune with God's desire for her or anyone else. It was not until after a couple of years of seminary that Linda realized God had called both of them into ministry.

Before entering seminary, this author started preaching as a local pastor in a rural United Methodist Church. On Sunday, July 19, 1992, he preached his first sermon at Needham United Methodist Church, his first appointment. It was a wonderful feeling for him. It was better than obtaining a large order or any other great accomplishment in his life. It was hard to explain. It was not pride or ego, as he expected. It was a feeling of joy and peace. He told himself, "I want to continue doing this." This experience of preaching in a small church was a good way for him to start pastoring because he could spend the allotted time developing sermons without the need of doing the other requirements of pastoring. He could continue in his secular *good-paying* job to support his wife, family, and himself in the manner to which they were accustomed. This seemed to be a good compromise between God and the rest of this preacher's world.

And then, while this author was driving to Lexington, Kentucky, on the morning of July 21, 1992, he crossed the Kentucky River where he had initially accepted the Lord. As he crossed the river, he praised the Lord and was thankful and humble as was his custom at this spot. He also asked the Lord if he was doing the right things for the kingdom, and God said, "Not enough." He contemplated the full-time versus part-time issue again all day; on the way home that evening, God said to stay with the process and it will be "enough." He was still listening to God and trying to let God make the

decisions, but he was still consciously interfering and bargaining with God and not totally trusting God, as he should. On August 14, 1992, he graduated from License to Preach School, a school for lay pastors. During these two weeks he had many opportunities to think about his continual problem of full-time or part-time ministry. He concluded that God would accept him as a Part Time Local Pastor, or so he thought. . . .

During all this time, he had prayed to the Lord if God wanted him to become a full time pastor to give him a *concrete sign* such as Gideon is recorded to have received. He suggested the cancellation of his firm's largest client would be an example as such a sign, but he knew that was not a good one because that act would financially cripple M/S Sales, the partnership in which he owned an interest. Well, it happened two weeks later, on August 31, 1992. Their largest client gave M/S Sales notice that their contract was canceled. This was forty to fifty percent of the revenues, and he knew what he must do. He started the process of applying to seminary and full-time ministry. He learned that day that God answers prayers, and that he must be careful what he prayed for! He also realized that he was bargaining with God, as had the people of the Deuteronomic Law in the Old Testament. On that same day of the concrete sign, he went to Needham United Methodist Church to be alone with God. He did a visual prayer, and this is what he recorded as a poem.

I MET JESUS

I went to the beach of my Prayer Island
Jesus, my Lord, came to me as I walked along the waters edge
I was troubled and so I asked Him to help.
He took my hand and we walked along the beach
I felt a complete sense of calmness
We, the Lord and I, went into a fog bank
I was nervous because I could not see far ahead
Jesus asked, "Do you trust me?"
I said, "Yes."
We walked on.

Then my surroundings turned black
It was as though nothing was there
I could not see my hand, but Jesus was there
I was anxious
Jesus asked, "Do you trust me?"
I said, "Yes."
We walked on.

Then Jesus and I came to a cliff
A high cliff, a very high cliff
I could see the countryside below for miles
Jesus asked, "Do you trust me?"
I hesitated, I was terrified
But then I said, "Yes."
We walked on....
With Jesus, anything is possible.

August 13, 1992

Approximately four months later, January 12, 1993, while discerning his future ministry this searcher stopped at the Versailles United Methodist Church in Versailles, Kentucky, just outside Lexington. He had experienced the urge to stop at this church twice before, and it was an urge whose origin was external to him. The first time was a small urge in September 1992; and then a very strong urge in November 1992. That second time, he had stopped and tried a couple of doors, and they were locked. He was nervous and relieved that they were locked so he went on. This third time in January 1993, he stopped and searched for the unlocked door. It took five minutes, but he found it. He introduced himself to the secretary and asked to see the sanctuary. She said to make himself at home. He went into the sanctuary and it was beautiful with a colonial décor, but God was silent. He sat down on the front pew and prayed to God asking what he was doing here. He received nothing, and so he got up and walked around. Then it dawned on him to do a visual prayer, and this is what he recorded.

THE SECOND MEETING

I met our Lord Jesus, the Christ,
On the beach on my Prayer Island the other day
He asked me what was troubling me
I said I was concerned about my life and its direction
He offered his hand and I accepted
We then left the beach and walked out onto the water
We walked on the water, the ocean of life and struggles
He said, "Let go of my hand"
I did and began to sink.
But when we joined hands, I became buoyant again.
I asked my Lord about my wife, Linda, and our future
Jesus said for me to Lead and she will Follow
Back on the beach, Linda was standing there
I asked for her to join the Lord and I
She walked out onto the water to be with us.
It was a wonderful moment
If we would stay with Jesus, we would stay on top.

While Linda and I were walking with Jesus on the water
Our Lord moved forward to the horizon
Behind him was the most beautiful sunset I have ever seen
Linda and I were still buoyant on the water
"Keep your eyes on me and you will never sink," He said
It worked for both of us.
Then the Lord told us to look back at the beach
As we did, we began to sink into the ocean
But if we focused on Jesus, we would stay on top of the water.
We also discovered if we veered away from Jesus,
To any other part of the horizon
We would sink.

A storm came upon the ocean
Immense waves crashed down upon us
But as long as we stayed focused on Jesus
The waves would break around us and we would remain upright
And when the waters were calm
We could dance for joy and praise the Lord.

I asked our Lord about the sunset
"Is that Heaven behind you?"
Jesus replied, "Heaven is what makes this sunset"
The most beautiful sunset I have ever seen
Heaven is behind Jesus only
We must go to Him to get there

I asked about my worldly problems
He told me not to worry
These material problems will pass
Jesus then gave me a glimpse of my future
If I chose His path
Go into the ministry
Go to Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
My destiny is in Suburban Ministry
That is where the people are
That is where the people are moving.
I know these people since I have been there
Jesus said that Linda, my wife, would go along
She will be happy and the kids will be happy.
Thank you Lord Jesus for being in my life.

January 12, 1993

After the visual prayer, the author knew the purpose of this urge to visit this church in Versailles. The Lord wanted to talk to this part-time preacher and reassure him, and he was learning another way to listen to the Lord communicate with him. Today when this author is discouraged, he reads these poems and is comforted to continue on the journey with the Lord. When Linda, this author's wife, had trouble in this adjustment period of their lives, he also used these poems for continued reassurance. After this author's experience in the Versailles United Methodist Church, he started the application process to seminary, to the Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, an extension of the United Methodist Church he had attended as a child and later as an adult. In the process, this author's wife and he interviewed with Adolf Hansen where they stated that in order for them to change vocations the following would be needed: acceptance to seminary, a pastorate with a parsonage, a sale of their house, and a job for Linda. Adolf said this was doable, but first, the application to seminary needed to be accepted, which it was. With that accomplished, this writer wrote to the bishops and district superintendents in Northern Illinois and Wisconsin asking for an appointment with a parsonage to care for their family. A few weeks later, a letter from the bishop in Northern Illinois was received stating they had no need of him, and he thought, "Well, Lord, I have applied, but no place to stay; so I have done my earthly part, this is finished." He thought now this was a sign to continue this author's ministry as a Part Time Lay Pastor, and now both God and he were happy. But the Lord was not finished with him because Rev. Joyce Alford, district superintendent in Southeast Wisconsin called approximately two weeks later to say she had a student charge available. A meeting was arranged and the appointment made, and the author was on his way to seminary and hopefully ordination. Their house sold four

days later after the interview with the Pastor Parish Relations Committee in Wisconsin.

This was after the house had been on the market for a year. The Lord made the path very easy for him from the time he had applied to Garrett to the appointment and move to Wisconsin. The Lord even provided a job for Linda at the First United Methodist Church at Ft. Atkinson to help take care of their financial needs. Again, the Lord communicated to Linda and him through the actions of others who were also trying to follow God's desires. Another way the Lord communicates was revealed.

After arriving in Wisconsin, July 15, 1993, he had been figuring the family budget now that Linda was working at the First United Methodist Church in Ft. Atkinson. She went to work the first morning knowing she would work twenty hours per week. When this author figured the monthly budget, it was a few hundred dollars short, so he went to the sanctuary and prayed to God where he internally heard, "Don't worry, things will work out." He thought to himself and to God, "OK," and did not worry. Two hours later, Linda called and said that she would be working full time, and after he had computed the new budget with her new salary, the budget worked out perfectly. This is amazing grace.

Now, this appears like everything fell in place for this family's entry into ministry, which it did, but this is probably the only painless, merciful way the Lord could convince them to leave their comfortable life style. But to maintain this life as pastor was not as easy. The first year was a struggle to adjust from his old prosperous city life to a life in rural America without much disposable income. On the positive side of this experience, on August 17, 1993, Evelyn Reed, a parishioner, called to tell this pastor she had been healed at Dave Galbraith's concert August 15, 1993 at the Hebron United Methodist Church. Just two weeks previous to that, this pastor had prayed to God that it

would be nice to have a concrete sign that he was where he should be. He had suggested that maybe he heal someone, but maybe not quite so dramatic as a healing touch experience. He received what he had prayed for and knew that he was where God wanted him to be at that time. This was very comforting, and he was and is very grateful to the Lord for the assurance. God continued to nurture Linda, the kids, and him in a way they could understand.

After enrolling in seminary at Garrett on September 23, 1993, he knew what scholarships and grants he had been awarded, and he also knew that he would need an additional source of funds to continue seminary. He might have enough for the first year, but even the spring quarter was questionable. The Lord had said to him, "Do not worry," and he accepted that. In his journal this author had written that he knew God would take care of this problem, that he was looking forward to the results, and that he trusted in the Lord. At Christmas time of 1993 while Linda and he were looking at the student loan form, they decided to ask for financial help from their Christian friends in the Indianapolis area. Approximately forty-five letters were sent out, and they received enough scholarship money to supplement one year. They learned that living in the Kingdom is wonderful, and God does answer prayer. They were learning that obeying and trusting in the Lord is the key to God's blessings, continual dialogue, and support. They realized this empowerment by God is not theirs alone, but many different people have recorded it many times in the Bible and many other times in books and documents throughout the ages.

One of the gifts from attending seminary is the ability to read about the lives of other Christians and their journey. This empowerment is for all peoples and when they

collect in a community it is called the Church. Many people have many different gifts to give to this community and none should be shut out due to their social or economic class, their skin color, or their heritage. Love from God cuts across class, race, and cultural lines. This learning enhances the knowledge and experience this author gained as he traveled internationally in the business world. He remembers seeing the poor and oppressed along the streets as he was riding in a taxi in Hong Kong, and he remembers the materialism in Singapore where he rarely saw a child or old person because they were left in the rural villages in Malaysia. He can also remember the poor in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico where they had no electricity, and how the brightly lit contrast of El Paso, Texas, USA, seemed inappropriate across the twenty yards of the Rio Grande River. This author believes one of the gifts God gave him was the ability to motivate the parishioners to help persons less fortunate than they. This action would include enabling the congregation to study less fortunate and oppressed people, the giving of their money, giving missionary support, and volunteering for short-term mission trips from the parish.

Since seminary and while in parish ministry, God has constantly exhibited the presence of the Lord in big and little ways to this author. A parishioner once asked during his visit to her in the hospital if he would lay hands on her for healing. Her kidneys were only functioning about ten percent, and she was to start dialysis the next day. The pastor collected his thoughts, laid-on hands, and prayed; and while he was doing this, he felt something leave her. She described that moment as receiving the peace of the Lord. The next day it was discovered her kidneys were functioning at one hundred percent. God was speaking to this pastor in a new way. Another time, a parishioner was moving, and he gave this author his electronic lab equipment, which was an answer to prayer from the

previous week. This author had prayed to God that for him to complete the patent idea from ten years ago, and he needed certain equipment. That equipment is what he received from the parishioner. The little things are too numerous to list, but as this writer looks back, God was there, and God is always present. This author continues to learn, to listen, to trust, to look, and to see this presence of the Lord. This is *spirituality*.

The context for this preacher has been and is the local church; the worship event is a primary function for touching the most people the most often. The preaching event is also a primary focal point in the protestant tradition. In a local church, when the pastor teaches, administers, helps build the kingdom spiritually and physically, or gives pastoral care, he or she is interacting with a small group or a single person, usually on an intermittent basis. When the pastor administers the sacraments they touch the entire congregation, but this may only be once a month or once a quarter. It is through the preaching event (sermon event) within the worship setting that God touches the largest number of people through the preacher (and sometimes without him or her) on a consistent, reoccurring basis. The sermon event is the focal point of this project.

The actual context of this project is Rosedale Hills United Methodist Church, Indianapolis, Indiana. It is located in a suburb of Indianapolis about six miles from downtown, or half way between downtown and the edge of growth for the suburban sprawl. According to the Percept Group, Inc., this area's largest economic demographic group is Middle American Families (72% of population) as defined by the Census Bureau, and the largest race component is Anglo (94% of the population.)¹³ In

¹³ Percept Group, Inc. *Ten Basic Facts* [database on-line] (Rancho Santa Margarita, CA: Percept Group, Inc., accessed March 27, 2003); available from <http://www.link2lead.com/L2L/start.asp>; Internet.

generational terms, the Millennials (ages 0-20) and Survivors (ages 21-39) are both recorded as the largest age groups at 31% of population each. Married Couples (75% of population), are the largest segment of households. This church reflects most of these demographics. The average age of the congregation is in the age group of forty to fifty-five. The age category distribution of those attending during the period of January 1, 2004 and August 1, 2004 (the time frame in which the project took place) is shown in

Table 1:

Table 1. Age Category Distribution of Those Attending at Least Six Times

Rosedale Hills United Methodist Church

Time frame: January 1, 2004 to August 1, 2004

Age	Below 12	13 to 19	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 55	56 to 70	71 & over	Total
Attendance	28	17	19	17	36	48	24	189
Percent	14.8%	9.0%	10.1%	9.0%	19.0%	25.4%	12.7%	

The worship service has been primarily a traditional, oral and written liturgical experience; but in the past year, a praise band has been added for the ten minutes prior to the announced start time as well as other 'blended' worship aspects such as proclaiming the worship theme early in the service. Most of the congregants had never experienced an interactive visual sermon employing PowerPoint before this project.

In reviewing the spiritual history of the author, one may see that among the strengths and experiences that are brought to this ministry are: spiritual growth, development within a mainline denominational church, learning to listen to God, becoming a person of God through experiences and rational logic, possessing knowledge and expertise in electronic systems, and having a mechanical aptitude. This author's

spiritual growth started while attending Sunday School at an early age, and at the age of twelve being baptized and joining a mainline denomination, though not understanding what he was doing or his relationship with God at that time. He appreciates the church allowing him to join and nurturing him within this lack of understanding. This is identified as *grace*.

With that foundation of knowledge, he was able to learn to listen to God while outside of the church and deepen his understanding through rational logic for which he was trained in a bachelors degree program in electrical engineering. During this listening and growing process, he discerned a call from God to become a preacher, a call with which he wrestled and to which he finally responded positively. He started to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ from the Word in a small church in the country several miles from Indianapolis.

The spiritual synergy of this project converges on the author learning to listen to God, informing others, and seeing how God works in other people's lives. It brings to bear the previous experiences this author has had such as visual prayers and poems describing visual terms. It was quite natural for this author to increase this listening time with God during this project and attempt to quantify the results. Some persons had even predicted during the early development of this project, that this component of the project could contribute more than the visuals. However, this project did not measure these interventions separately.

The context has been and is the local protestant church, and the primary event touching the most people at the most often times is worship, with preaching being one of the primary focal points. The preaching preparation and delivery have evolved over the

years for this author. Initially, before seminary, he preached primarily from a literal interpretation of the Bible with illustrations and fictional stories to make the point. It was simple preaching. Then while attending seminary and teaching *The Disciple Bible Study* from Cokesbury, he preached on the point of the previous week's lesson. As seminary progressed, the sermons became academic expressions of biblical knowledge and, hopefully, led an application to people's lives. Then a sermon subscription service was discovered, named *Homiletics*, and sermons were fashioned using its theme and purpose. Sometimes the writers and editors of *Homiletics* chose to interpret biblical material differently than what the present congregation needed or wanted to hear, so the author learned to discern and add his own material and interpretation. Also during this time, a more experienced preacher told him an important idea, "Half of sermon preparation is prayer and mediation."¹⁴ This was an important insight to an engineering trained person who uses mostly reason and logic steeped in seminary academia. As an aid to the delivery of all these sermons, four half sheets of paper with a partial sentence outline were used because it was discovered these four pages, when preached, averaged eighteen minutes of preaching time.

After this phase, this preacher disciplined himself to preach from a one-page outline on the back of the current Sunday's bulletin, an idea also from Rev. John Wells. This researcher had experienced this during one of John's sermons, and he experienced a connection between the preacher and the receiver. The next step for this preacher to become a more effective orator was to preach without notes; and for him to do this, he

¹⁴ Rev. John Wells, First United Methodist Church, Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin

had to trust his public speaking ability, his theology, and his Christology. He accomplished this over the next few years.

When this author's previous context, Cook Memorial United Methodist Church, Jeffersonville, Indiana, decided to add video projection in the sanctuary, his experiences and knowledge in the electronic field along with his mechanical aptitude were employed for expanding the physical Kingdom of God. This is when this preacher added visually enhanced sermons. This physical expansion then led to a spiritual expansion in the present members and among new attendees because the worship elements were presented in a visual format including sermon illustrations, main points, and primary biblical verses. This visual presentation may be equated with the pictorial stain glass windows found in churches where they tell a visual story of the Bible. Employing computers, video projectors, and video monitors creates an *electronic stained glass window* that may be changed several times throughout a sermon presentation.

This project of an Electronic Stained Glass Window did employ the Action Research Team, as defined by the D.Min. Program at United Theological Seminary and Davydd J. Greenwood and Morten Levin in their book, *Introduction to Action Research*.¹⁵ The components of action research are the *context associates* (members of the congregation), *professional associates* (paid persons with terminal degrees), and the *peer associates* (other D.Min. students). This project hopefully transformed the congregation of the context, the peers, the professional associates, and this researcher. These transformations are a result of the convergence of the history of the preacher, the

¹⁵ Davydd J. Greenwood and Morten Levin, *Introduction to Action Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1998).

spiritual experiences of the preacher, and the willingness of the context to try something new. The finger of God is very evident in all of this convergence and transformation; and this can be defined as *spirituality in the practice of ministry*.

CHAPTER TWO

STATE OF THE ART

When persons think about the state of the art of a disciplined, meditative, spiritual life, there is none per se. There are different forms or re-invented forms of activities, but they have been done before. It is similar to a new translation of the Bible. The same message is given, but it is given in a different form or translation. The relationship between God and humans is the same as when God started the relationship. The one new form of communication that may be considered as state-of-the-art would be the giving and receiving of daily, weekly, or monthly e-mails with devotional material. This is still the same message and material, but it is exchanged in new electronic form.

State of the art visuals are also transmitting the same messages in a new form, but the intricacies and compositions of the systems are much more complex. Visuals are becoming more widely used in churches to enhance the message and interpretation of God. They are also beginning to be recognized as a means of conveying a spirituality that cannot be transmitted any other way. Edward McNulty states, “First, the creator God is the source for all inspiration and is able to work through any creative mind, whether

professedly Christian or not Second, artists create more than they realize.”¹ He continues to describe his use of visuals in various worship services and reports positive results.

Several times in Sunday worship I have used a painting as an illustrative point in dialogue with the children or in a sermon. A large reproduction of the work would be used with the children during their portion of the liturgy. The congregation could see it during the longer sermon, many of the people coming up for a closer look following the service Slides of a number of works were set to music for the Christmas Eve service. For the Maundy Thursday service I chose about a dozen interpretations of *The Last Supper* and showed them while offering a few observations of the events of that important night. At noon on the first three days of Holy Week we [held] a luncheon at the church; the meditation for these centered on a different version of *The Crucifixion* each day.²

The results and responses of his D.Min. project were positive and included the following quotations from the parishioner participants of Northminster Presbyterian Church, Dayton, Ohio: “ Sharpening of my visual perception and biblical insights. . . . Insight into the images of Christ. . . . Man’s ideas of Christ as he progressed.”³ Projected images were used in this project also, and they too were well accepted. There were several comments about the appreciation for the use of projected slides to present the works of art.⁴ This use of projected art coincides with what others are doing with visuals. Dan Kimball writes, “ When we design worship gatherings, we look for ways to incorporate the arts. One of the

¹ Edward McNulty, “Images of Christ in Art and Film.” D.Min. diss., United Theological Seminary, 1992, 16.

² Ibid., 343-344.

³ Ibid., 345.

⁴ Ibid., 346.

ways we do this is to use art consistently in all of our PowerPoint presentations during the musical worship, teaching, and prayer meditations.”⁵

Today, many churches are using video projection during the worship service. Michael Slaughter, the senior pastor of Ginghamsburg United Methodist Church near Dayton, Ohio, writes, “Electronic media is to the ‘Reformation’ of the twenty-first century what Gutenberg’s press was to the Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. TV, having come of age in the 1950s, has changed the way we learn our perceptions of what makes sense.”⁶ At Ginghamsburg, they use video in many aspects of the worship service, including slides for announcements and hymns and a projected outline of the sermon. At the church this pastor previously served, Cook Memorial United Methodist Church, Jeffersonville, Indiana, a computer driven video projector was used for announcements, birthday and anniversary announcements, hymn lyrics, scripture, and sermon illustrations. This is well received as are the visual presentations at a satellite service of St. Luke’s United Methodist Church, Indianapolis, Indiana, called The Garden. A full contemporary service is presented in a dinner theatre facility using their video projection system as well as specialized lighting. The main sanctuary of St Luke’s United Methodist Church has a Diamond Vision screen, which is similar to the ones used in sports stadiums across the United States.

Other churches, such as Cross of Glory Lutheran Church, use movie clips to help illustrate a sermon point. “The church, which emphasizes outreach, has a big screen in the sanctuary that is used not only to display words to hymns, but also movie scenes to

⁵ Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 148.

⁶ Michael Slaughter, *Out on the Edge* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 25.

introduce a liturgical segment or illustrate a sermon point.”⁷ All of these techniques help deliver the message more fully in the worship experience.

Studies have shown that churches are changing to visual presentations at a rate that is faster than perceived by this researcher and others. Len Wilson and Jason Moore tell us in their book, *Digital Storytellers, The Art of Communicating the Gospel in Worship*, that “A randomized telephone study of 364 churches by our publisher [Abingdon Press] shows that 38 percent of our congregations are projecting media at this time (using front, rear, and older overhead projectors) and that an additional 20 percent of churches plan to do so within a year.”⁸ This new technology is used to reach the next generation in a way that is relevant to their culture. Jewell says it this way, “Gen N [defined as the next generation] does not have a greater need than any other generation for belonging, but they do have a multitude of digital tools with which to engage their search.”⁹ This young generation is using more communications tools than any previous generation; they use cell phones, instant messages, text messages, and e-mail, and they use it in a multitasking way. This project attempted to measure the response of a multi-generational congregation in a worship setting.

Movie clips have become so prevalent, that there are now copyright license administrative agencies such as Christian Video Licensing International (CVLI). They can be found on the Internet at www.cvli.org. With one fee, churches are able to obtain a

⁷ John Dart, “Can Hollywood Teach and Inspire” found in *Christian Century*, March 22, 2003, 9-10.

⁸ Len Wilson and Jason Moore, *Digital Storytellers, The Art of Communicating the Gospel in Worship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 15.

⁹ John J. Jewell, *Wired for Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press), 2004, 52.

copyright license to view film clips in their worship services and other functions. All of this enhances and solidifies the message the presenter is delivering.

Commercial enterprises are also embarking on offerings to provide images to churches. *Homiletics*, a subscription magazine and Internet resource provider is now offering visual material. As Henry Brinton wrote in a recent article, "In contrast to the era in which spoken services were punctuated only by hymns, increasing numbers of Protestant churches are now using PowerPoint presentations —complete with music and dramatic slides — to illustrate sermons and capture some of the wandering minds in the pews."¹⁰ *Homiletics* offers a main theme picture slide and bullet points to be presented with the sermon material they offer each week. This can be found at www.homiletics.com. Other providers on the Internet, which provides similar more generic thematic pictures, are: Ginghamsburg Global Worship Resources at www.ginghamsburg.org; Lumicon at www.lumicon.org, edited by Tom Boomershine, www.christiangraphicdesign.com; and Oxygen Multimedia Ministries at www.christian-powerpoint.com. Also, there are now offerings for recorded video clips of testimony, witnessing, and parodies of movies and commercials. One offering comes from Priority One TV, Plano, Texas, located on the Internet at www.priorityonetv.com. Another similar offering is at www.worshipfilms.com. With a good Internet search engine, a presenter is able to find almost anything suitable an illustration presentation.

There are also some books, with compact disks included, which contain material for use in worship. These include items such as suggested opening music, reader's

¹⁰ Henry Brinton, "Show, Don't Tell," *Homiletics*, May - June 2004, 8.

theatre, reprise, call to worship, song celebration, offerings and featured music, message, communion, and sending out into the world to do ministry.¹¹

The approach used in this project was slightly different. Instead of employing a thematic picture as pioneered by Ginghamsburg and sold by entities such as Communication Resources and Lumicon, this author utilized the PowerPoint displays in an interactive fashion. When a movement of the sermon was about Jesus, a picture of Jesus was used; and if a cultural connection was used, such as McDonald's restaurants, a picture of one of their restaurants was used. This is the style that is used in boardrooms, sales presentations, and other business meetings. During this project, approximately twenty slides or pictures were used in a twenty-minute sermon. These slides were more than a thematic picture or a pretty picture with an outline or bullet points; these were visual creations designed to help the receiver grasp the message more fully. See Appendices D, E, F, and G for sermons and pictures used in the research.

Pastors are reminded that they “need to be creative in their methods of communication, using fresh anecdotes and imagery, just as Jesus did, without compromising the richness of the biblical message. Jesus was master at using verbal pictures to make his points, whether he compared the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed, a treasure, a merchant or a net thrown into the sea.”¹² The use of television-like images has, and is, invading the church sanctuary and meeting halls. This observer has noticed that for some participants this intrusion is a revolution; for others, it feels like a natural evolution; and for some, this sensation feels like both. As generations and cultures

¹¹ Kim Miller and others, *Handbook for Multisensory Worship, Volume 2* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press), 2001.

¹² Brinton, “Show, Don’t Tell,” 8.

ask for different media to present the gospel message, it is hoped that the church will respond in a useful and positive way. This project measures one way to use this new emerging medium, buttressed by spiritual disciplines.

CHAPTER THREE

FOUNDATIONS

Spirituality and visual images to portray God and the truths God desires for humans to learn have been utilized throughout the Bible as well as throughout history. Also, spirituality and visual images are theologically appropriate as very helpful tools for the preacher to utilize in the delivery of who God is and what God wants God's people to do. Biblically, it has been recorded that effective preachers, such as Peter (Acts 2:1-21) or Moses (Numbers 21:4-9), have been spiritually led by God to communicate the message. It is written in the Bible that God has also used visuals such as Moses with a snake on a stick (Numbers 21:4-9) and Jesus on the cross (John 3:14-15) to further that message. Down through the ages effective preachers who made a difference in the history of Christianity have used both spirituality and new ways to spread the Good News. Augustine and Calvin changed the preaching style and purpose while John Wesley boldly ventured into the open, outside the sanctuary, which was a radical move in his century. During the history of changing venues for the proclamation of the Gospel, electronic broadcasting, radio, and television also changed the medium from person-to-person verbal communication to over-the-air communication to larger audiences who might not

be able to physically participate or were afraid of leaving their homes. Now, the electronic broadcasting style of delivery has returned to the sanctuary by using a television-like medium to enhance the worship experience. This delivery usually employs PowerPoint software by Microsoft Corporation inside of the sanctuary. This method is used for displaying announcements, words to hymns and praise songs, and for assisting the delivery of the sermon.

Theologically, the spirituality of the preacher is very important since the involvement of the Holy Spirit is required as confirmed by both Barth and Whitehead. Karl Barth writes, “They cannot have real power unless they arise from the realization that the Son of God has come in the flesh, that His Holy Ghost [Spirit] has been poured out upon the Church, and that the duty of speaking about God has been laid upon the Church.”¹ Alfred Whitehead, who is on the opposite end of the theological spectrum, concurs with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, even though he does not name the Holy Spirit as such. “The concrescence is directed by the subjective aim, that the subjective forms of the feelings shall be such as to constitute the eternal objects into relevant lures of feeling* severally appropriate for all realizable basic conditions.”² The symbol “*” indicates the editor’s note of a possible correction to “lure for feeling.” The spirituality of the preacher could include *alone time* with God and a constant transformation, as opposed to a one-time event. This is indicated in almost all research and thought on spirituality. Evelyn Underhill writes, “‘He who is in a hurry,’ said St.

¹ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, trans. G.W. Bromiley (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 69.

² Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality, Corrected Edition*, ed. David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1979), 88.

Vincent de Paul, 'delays things of God.' But when those who are at least attempting to live the life of the Spirit, and consequently become more or less sensitive to its movements to have no clear light, they will often become aware, if they will wait in quietness, of a subtle yet insistent pressure in favor of the path which thy should take."³ This transformation continues and is transferred, hopefully, to the congregation in their hearing of the Word from the transformed preacher. The transformation of both speaker and hearer is one of the primary reasons for preaching. This transformation includes leading to positive action, connecting the life to the Bible, and connecting the unseen to the seen.

These connections and leadings are more fully absorbed by the hearer if they are presented as fine art in a theatrical performance setting utilizing visual aids such as video projection. Leonora Tubbs Tisdale says, "At its best, Christian preaching is not only an act of theological construction; it is also a work of art. Through its language, images, and form, preaching creates a world and invites the one hearing it to enter into it."⁴ Biblical, historical, and theological foundations are numerous, and the following are good examples.

³ Evelyn Underhill, *The Spiritual life*, in *A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants*, ed. Ruben P. Job and Norman Shawchuck (Nashville, TN: The Upper Room, 1983), 252.

⁴ Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997), 122.

Biblical Foundations

In looking through the Bible we can read many examples of how the Spirit led people to use images to help interpret God's revelation. As accounts of the Bible are interpreted, two questions in relation to this project must be asked: 1) How were these people and events led by the Spirit? And 2) How does God present the message in a visual way? In Acts 2:1-21, we see the Spirit lead Peter to become a preacher to thousands, and in Numbers 21:4-9, we see God using a visual image of a serpent on a pole to heal the Israelites during the Exodus. Jesus on the cross uses himself as a visual reference in John 3:14-15.

Acts 2:1-21, Empowered Preaching by Peter

A perennial example of a preacher being led by the Spirit is Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost. After the Spirit, appearing as tongues of flame and sounds such as the wind, empowers each disciple, Peter walks into the town square and speaks with peoples of different languages who understand him. "The power of the Spirit in this case evinces an extraordinary ability for them to speak in other languages—That is, in foreign languages unknown to them."⁵ And this same Peter who had cringed at the accusation of a servant a few weeks before now speaks before a great crowd. "He spoke with boldness and with power. If anyone had said to Peter, 'I didn't know you had it in you,' he surely

⁵ Leander E. Keck, ed., *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 10, *The Book of Acts*, by Robert W. Wall (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 55.

would have said, ‘I didn’t. It was the Spirit of the Lord Jesus that gave me utterance.’ ”⁶

This Spirit is what gives preaching the power to persuade, using ordinary communication by ordinary humans; it is also what creates the ‘God moment’ during the sermon. The God moment is that point in the sermon when the hearer feels closest to God or touched by God via the message. This message is delivered through verbal speech. “Moreover, this miracle of speech is not just good rhetoric but the result of the Spirit’s ‘filling’ that issues in elevated insight.”⁷ “The Pentecost story reminds us that there is something beside what we see; ‘Simon Peter, fisherman’ does not tell the whole story. That something else called beside we call the spirit.”⁸ The speech of the preacher can be understood because it is the Spirit who is using a willing human to make profound words. “The dramatic speech is neither ecstatic or unintelligible; it is language that communicates to others ‘the wonders of God’ (2:11).”⁹

⁶ George Arthur Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. 9, *The Book of Acts*, by Theodore P. Ferris (Nashville, TN: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1954), 40.

⁷ Leander E. Keck, ed., *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. 10, *The Book of Acts*, by Robert W. Wall (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 57.

⁸ George Arthur Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. 9, *The Book of Acts*, by Theodore P. Ferris (Nashville, TN: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1954), 40.

⁹ Leander E. Keck, ed., *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. 10, 57.

This infilling usually comes after spending much waiting in and for the presence of God. In Acts 1: 14a, it is said of the disciples, “They all joined together constantly in prayer.” (NIV) “So much of this passage involves believers’ ‘coming together’ in order to learn, to wait upon God, to pray in preparation to witness in Jesus’ name by the Spirit’s power.”¹⁰ Any modern day preacher would be advised also to wait upon the Lord, which is called *Spiritual formation* or *discipline*. The preacher becomes a disciple, one who is disciplined.

Numbers 21:4-9, Snake on a Stick

In the beginning, God used visuals to describe creation and consummated a promise with a rainbow for Noah. God also instructed Moses to use a visual. Moses used a bronze or copper image of a snake held up by a branch of wood to help his congregation understand that they should rely on God. They had complained once again while on this portion of the Exodus that God had abandoned them, and the Bible tells us venomous snakes bit the people. "The fiery, red-inflamed wound, inflicted by the bite of the serpent, was healed by a look of faith to the bronze serpent which Moses had set up."

¹¹ The *Interpreter's Bible* tells us "Here is an intimation at least of spiritual homeopathy which rests on a sound basis in human experience, 'like cures like,' wounds heal wounds."¹² God had used this image to teach the Israelites the healing power of God.

¹⁰ Ibid., 46.

¹¹ George Arthur Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 2, *The Book of Numbers*, by Albert George Butzer (Nashville, TN: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953), 243.

¹² Ibid., 243.

"Healing, however, does not just happen independently of the Israelites. The people are required to gaze at the snake in order to access its healing power."¹³ Besides gazing they also had to sincerely repent of their sin of self-sufficiency. "Their Confession of sin was shallow; they believed they could fulfill the promises of God through their own efforts, without God's help."¹⁴ The required healing took all of these actions, including the visual image. "The background of Israel's earlier confession of sin in Numbers 14 helps to explain why God does not simply get rid of the serpents immediately."¹⁵ Healing took place only after an image was used and the people 'fixed their gaze.' "In both the command (v. 8) and its fulfillment (v. 9), healing must be accompanied by an act of obedience to Yahweh: looking at the image of the snake. In the two verses two different words for 'to see' are used, perhaps for literary variety, but also to stress that it was necessary to do more than simply 'see' or catch a glimpse of the copper serpent; one actually had to 'fix one's gaze' or 'pay attention to' this figure - a definite act of will - if one wanted to be healed."¹⁶ One also has to remember that the image is just a representation of God and not God; the image points to the real God. "It was an image, not of the deity, but of the creature used by God to punish the wayward people. Thus

¹³ Leander E. Keck, ed., *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 2, *The Book of Numbers*, by Thomas B. Dozeman (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 167.

¹⁴ Dennis T. Olson, *Numbers, Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1996), 135.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 135-136.

¹⁶ Timothy R. Ashley, *The Book of Numbers in The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993),

good flowed from the image of the very thing that caused the pain."¹⁷ God has employed images such as the snake to get the message across and to heal God's people.

John 3:14-15, Jesus Lifted Up On A Stick, Too

In this passage we see God, through Jesus, using a visual image to proclaim the most profound action of God in the Christian faith. God uses Jesus, lifted up and crucified, to be the act Christians remember the most. It is in the sign of the cross that Christians are reminded of the salvific acts of God. Jesus himself uses the comparison of the bronze serpent and him on a cross to make this point to Nicodemus. "The point of the comparison here is that as healing came to the snake-bitten Israelites by looking at the brazen serpent hanging from a pole, so life is given to those who look up with eyes of faith upon the Son of man hanging on the Cross."¹⁸ Again, the wound heals the wounded with the wounding object used as a visual stimulus for the believer. "Verse fourteen also contains a key to the theological grounding of the Evangelist's attraction to irony; the cross as humiliation is actually exaltation."¹⁹ God has used a visual image to claim God's most sacred act: crucifixion and resurrection. "And certainly it is above all by being lifted

¹⁷ Timothy A. Lenchak, S.V.D., "Puzzling Passages: Numbers 21:9", in *The Bible Today* 39 (2001) found in *Old Testament Abstracts*, Vol. 25, No. 2, June 2002 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 2002), 306.

¹⁸ George Arthur Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 8, *The Book of John*, by Wilbert F. Howard (Nashville, TN: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1952), 508.

¹⁹ Leander E. Keck, ed., *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 9, *The Book of John*, by Gail R. O'Day (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 553.

upon that Cross of shame that he has won by far the most souls.”²⁰ Should not then the church use visual images as well that goes beyond the physical presence of a metal or wooden cross?

So, throughout the Bible, God has used spirit-filled people and visual images, such as snakes and Jesus lifted up for all to see, to help transform people throughout the ages. This transformation is not just for the people within the Biblical context; this transformation continues today through the reading and discerning of God’s message in the Bible as well as other earthen vessels such as preachers and visual images.

Historical Foundations

Spirituality of Previous Preachers

Several challenges face a preacher each week as he or she prepares to deliver the message, and one of the key challenges is preparing oneself for the delivery. Throughout the history of great Christian leaders, one of the characteristics they all share is their spirituality and practiced discipline. They have handed down to us from their witness many proceedings on how to become more spiritually connected with God. Good examples of historically well-known preachers are Augustine who became a bishop, John Calvin, a part of the reformation movement, and John Wesley, founder of the Methodist movement. Stephen F. Olford in *Anointed Expository* says that the “challenge the

²⁰ George Arthur Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. 8, 508.

preacher must face is to develop the disciplined obedience of an athlete."²¹ This echoes what Paul says in Philippians,

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.²²

Augustine informs his readers that this spiritual quest aids us in growing closer to God and thus speaking for God in a more complete way. For Augustine, "We are, and we are what we are, by participation in God, and by our participation in God we are (though we may not realise it) in direct and immediate contact with him."²³ Augustine goes on further to say that it is possible for humans to attain the divine light or spiritual contact (spirituali quodam contactu), but that experience will be transient since humans are not capable of maintaining contact for long since they are not fully capable of holding onto the divine. The human soul will plunge back into the dim humdrum of everyday life.²⁴ Augustine continues, "The links between man and God are always there; the soul of man is always in sense, in God; God is always present in his entirety to the soul."²⁵ Augustine

²¹ Stephen F. Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 51.

²² Philippians 3:10-14 New International Version (NIV)

²³ David N. Bell, *The Image And Likeness: The Augustinian Spirituality Of William Of St. Thierry* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1984), 24.

²⁴ Bell, *The Image And Likeness: The Augustinian*, 34.

²⁵ Ibid., 33.

contends that a person can communicate spiritually with God even though it will be transient and not a full connection. Once a preacher is connected to God, the better the message should flow through him or her. Augustine experienced this effect and so may the present-day preacher.

John Calvin also has contributed to the field of spirituality. Lucien Joseph Richard informs us, "The summary of the Institutes of 1536 reviews the major themes of Calvin's spirituality [:] Knowledge of God and of man; the necessity of honoring the glory of God, demanding, on the part of man, faith, service and obedience; total dependence upon God's word incarnated in Christ, and the practical attitude of man expressed in piety and worship."²⁶ Richard continues with, "The importance given to the meditation of Christ underlines the primacy of the Father in Calvin's thought. He expressed this primacy in terms of the glory of God and of our need to worship and obey the father."²⁷ Randall C. Gleason contributes to this thought with, "The believer is individually responsible to pursue mortification in conjunction with the vivification of his nature by the Holy Spirit. This begins with self-denial, which is both negative and positive. It includes not only the renunciation of our depraved mind and fleshly desires but also the love of neighbors and devotion to God."²⁸ Gleason continues with Calvin also advocating the vital role of suffering which plays in conforming us to Christ. "Only through bearing the cross of afflictions can the believer mortify his confidence in the flesh. And the believer must meditate on the future life in order to overcome our fleshly love of this present life."

²⁶ Lucien Joseph Richard, *The Spirituality of John Calvin* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1974], 99.

²⁷ Ibid., 100

²⁸ Randall C. Gleason, *John Calvin And John Owen On Mortification: A Comparative Study In Reformed Spirituality* (New York, NY: P. Lang, 1995), 68-69.

United Methodists study John Wesley and his spirituality since he is regarded as the founder of the Methodist way. It is said, "He encountered Jeremy Taylor, the seventeenth-century bishop's Rules and Exercises of Holy Living and Dying with its teaching about 'purity of intention' . . . He began to keep a rule based on Taylor:

- 1 Begin and end every day with God: and sleep not immoderately.
- 2 Be diligent in your calling
- 3 Employ all spare hours in religion; as able.
- 4 All holidays (holy days)
- 5 Avoid drunkards and busybodies
- 6 Avoid curiosity, and all useless employments and knowledge.
- 7 Examine yourself every night.
- 8 Never on any account pass a day without setting aside at least an hour for devotion
- 9 Avoid all manner of passion." ²⁹

"All of this reinforced Wesley's resolve to be 'an altogether Christian, all-devoted to God'. But [William] Law also taught him not only to read but to study the Bible and apply it to himself, make it his 'frame of reference' for all events, circumstances and decisions of his life." ³⁰ John Wesley graded everything he said, did, or thought based upon his interpretation of the Bible. It was his spirituality guide. Wesley discovered that what happened to Christians after their conversion was as important as the conversion itself. It dismayed him to return to a town or village and see those converted to have backslid into their former life. "Wesley was even more interested in what happened after

²⁹ John Wesley, *Fire Of Love: The Spirituality Of John Wesley*, selected by Gordon Wakefield (New Canaan, CT: Keats Pub., 1977, c1976), 12-13.

³⁰ Ibid., 14.

conversion to Christ than in conversion itself."³¹ Wesley felt very strongly about *sanctification*, or the process of becoming closer to God, through disciplined and methodical ways.

Spiritual disciplines and ways have been with the great preachers and leaders of the Christian movement since its beginning. Augustine, Calvin, and Wesley have all shown that spirituality was an important part of their lives. Anyone who desires to preach effectively must attend to his or her spiritual disciplines as well.

History of New Preaching Styles and Content

History also informs us that the preaching style, purpose, and content have changed throughout time just as there have been different reasons and audiences to be affected for God. Different people at different times have come to the preaching event with different attitudes and needs. "The early church preached with at least two different purposes and to two different audiences. Jewish Christian preaching, aimed at other Jews, tended to be exegetical in style. Its purpose was to place Jesus Christ in the context of Jewish Scripture. . . . Gentile preaching of the same period addressed both Jews and gentiles in a voice less concerned with exegesis and more concerned with repentance. Paul's sermon on Mars Hill exemplifies the Gentile approach to preaching"³² This example, along with many examples of new preaching for their time, is part of a long list

³¹ Ibid., 22.

³² Jana Childers, *Performing the Word: Preaching as Theatre* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 27.

including Augustine who preached exegetically instead of classic rhetoric; Calvin, who preached for revelation; Martin Luther, who preached for encounter and absorption; and John Wesley, who changed his physical location from inside the Church building to outside, a radical move for his time period.

It was Augustine who preached with a different model than previous preachers. Actually, according to Jana Childers, "it is the combination of models — exegetical preaching, preaching for conversion, and didactic preaching — along with the influence of classical rhetoric, that we see in Augustine's (354-430) homiletic."³³ As the Middle Ages approached, preaching changed again as "In the twelfth century Alan of Lille (1128-1202) articulated yet another alterative. For him the implied purpose of preaching might be called 'formation.' Preaching's work is seen as a lifelong process - a process Alan compares to climbing a ladder."³⁴ For John Calvin, "The purpose of preaching is revelation, but it is the kind of revelation that comes in communing. God 'approaches,' Christ is present, the Holy Spirit is illumining as the Word of God is revealed."³⁵ "It was Martin Luther who developed the notion of preaching as 'encounter' The purpose of preaching was 'absorption.' The preacher and the listener should be 'absorbed' into Christ."³⁶ "For Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), conversion (persuasion) was the goal of preaching. By 1734, when revival fell upon Edward's New England church, the influence

³³ Ibid., 27.

³⁴ Ibid., 29.

³⁵ Ibid., 30.

³⁶ Ibid., 30.

of New England's Puritan ancestors had waned to the point that only 5 percent of Americans were members of a church."³⁷

For John Wesley, adopting and presenting a new preaching style was primarily location. John decided to take his preaching out of the church and into the streets and fields where the people were. This was at times frustrating as indicated by his journal entries.

"Wesley [on] open air preaching

Sunday, A.M., May 5, Preached in St. Anne's. Was asked not to come back anymore.

Sunday, P.M., May 5, Preached in St. John's. Deacons said "Get out and stay out."

Sunday, A.M., May 12, Preached in St. Jude's. Can't go back there, either.

Sunday, A.M., May 19, Preached in St. Somebody Else's. Deacons called special meeting and said I couldn't return.

Sunday, P.M., May 19, Preached on street. Kicked off street.

Sunday, A.M., May 26, Preached in meadow. Chased out of meadow as bull was turned loose during service.

Sunday, A.M., June 2, Preached out at the edge of town. Kicked off the highway.

Sunday, P.M., June 2, Afternoon, preached in a pasture. Ten thousand people came out to hear me."³⁸

When a new method of preaching is introduced, it may not be accepted because there is usually some resistance to change. Wesley was looking for greater results and transformation than those just sitting in the pews week after week. History has shown that

³⁷ Ibid., 31.

³⁸ John Wesley, quoted in *Homiletics Online, Animating Illustrations* [database on-line] (Canton, OH: Communication Resources, Inc., accessed September 15, 2004); available from <http://www.homileticsonline.com/subscriber/default.asp>; Internet.

what people want and what they need can be two different things. People sometimes desire not to be transformed and may react negatively. John Wesley shows that persistence of newly inspired ideas can pay off and transform people.

So, throughout the history of preaching, one can see that some of the greatest known leaders and preachers have employed new methods for preaching. The style and purpose have evolved from classical rhetoric, to exegetical, to formation, to revelation, and to encounter and absorption. Location has changed from inside the sanctuary to outdoor preaching, which was new in John Wesley's day. Each time, God has used this new style and purpose to continue to transform humanity as seen by the growth of believers each of these men brought about.

History of Electronic Preaching

"Technically speaking, over-the-air religion began with the first message tapped out on Samuel Morse's telegraph in 1837: 'What hath God wrought?'"³⁹ This new medium has evolved from that early beginning to big business in television where visual stimuli are employed very heavily. The media has evolved from radio, to televised worship services, to televised religious programming, to employing television technology inside of the church, and to utilizing computers in graphic, visual images projected onto screens during the worship service.

³⁹ Hal Erickson, *Religious Radio and Television in the Untied States, 1921-1991* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1992), 1.

The real beginning of Christian broadcasting was when radio broadcasted to a larger audience than one, Morse's assistant. "The great period of mass evangelism, typified by the work of Billy Sunday, had ended with the movement in disarray even before his death in 1935. In many ways, the discovery of radio was the spark that revitalized the movement."⁴⁰ "The first radio formal, all out religious program was by Pittsburgh's Calvary Episcopal Church, Rev. Lewis B Whittemore, broadcast on January 2, 1921 on station KDKA, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania."⁴¹ As the electronics industry innovated, religious broadcasting did too. "[Oral] Roberts began on television in the 1950s, and moved into the electronic church era with a new format in the late 1960s. He had had a long career as a revivalist and faith healer, and his television work began with the broadcast of his tent meetings in 1954. Denied network time because of the controversy that would accompany someone who claimed to heal terminal illness with his hands through prayer, his program would be nonetheless a mainstay of Sunday mornings throughout the country in the 1950s."⁴² It was the 700 Club that really put religious television broadcasting into the forefront. "By the time 'The 700 Club' began national syndication in the early 1970s, several more all-religious television services had come into being. Dr. Eugene Scott, head of Faith Center, Inc., inaugurated the Los Angeles UHF outlet KHOF-TV, the first full-time (24 hour) television service of its kind."⁴³ "The 1980s saw an upsurge in electronic religion's audience for a multitude of reasons. One

⁴⁰ Stewart M. Hoover, *Mass Media Religion: The Social Sources Of The Electronic Church* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1988), 49.

⁴¹ Erickson, *Religious Radio and Television*, 1.

⁴² Hoover, *Mass Media Religion*, 58

⁴³ Erickson, *Religious Radio and Television*, 13.

was the ever growing availability of cable television bringing a wider variety of sectarian programming to areas that had previously relied on two or three local stations or the fuzzy signals from faraway channels."⁴⁴ "One of the most important reasons for the increase in television-ministry viewership, and one surprisingly overlooked by many television historians, was that it was simply more and more difficult in the 1980s for people to get out of the house. Crime in the streets, particularly crime directed against working-class women, poverty-level minorities, and the elderly - the groups that constituted the bulk of the religious television audience - made these people virtual prisoners in their own home."⁴⁵ Another reason religious television has been popular is that it gives viewers the confidence to be a Christian. "The electronic church has given its viewers new confidence. Their new identity allows them—even encourages them—to venture out into the world, and helps them to maintain their authenticity while doing so. It gives them role models in the form of successful Christians who are 'in the world, but not of it.'"⁴⁶

Religious broadcasting has taken "things full circle from the days thousands of years ago when music, dance, and drama all began to grow out of religious ceremonies. There always has to be some way to keep the audience coming back."⁴⁷ The people receiving the message have become accustomed to receiving this message in new and different ways as well as using visual cues pertaining to the message. The medium has become acceptable. "Fifty seven percent of television watchers have seen a religious

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴⁶ Hoover, *Mass Media Religion*, 233.

⁴⁷ Erickson, *Religious Radio and Television*, 17.

broadcast in a four-week period in February 1988.”⁴⁸ It also is known in North America that almost everyone watches television at some time during his or her weekly activities. The purpose behind the visual presentation in the church is to bring a television-like medium into the sanctuary and utilize its properties in the delivery of the sermon. This is the primary medium to which the present United States culture is accustomed.

Many churches are using video projection during the worship service. At the Ginghamsburg United Methodist Church near Dayton, Ohio where their senior pastor, Michael Slaughter, writes, “Electronic media [sic] is to the ‘Reformation’ of the twenty-first century what Gutenberg’s press was to the Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. TV, having come of age in the 1950s, has changed the way we learn our perceptions of what makes sense.”⁴⁹ At Ginghamsburg, they use video in all aspects of the worship service, employing a projected outline for the sermon section. Other churches use movie clips to help illustrate a sermon point such as Cross of Glory Lutheran Church. “The church, which emphasizes outreach, has a big screen in the sanctuary that is used not only to display words to hymns but also movie scenes to introduce a liturgical segment or illustrate a sermon point.”⁵⁰ All of this enhances and solidifies the message the presenter is delivering.

The use of television like images has and is invading the church sanctuary and meeting halls. For some participants, this intrusion is a revolution; and for others, it feels

⁴⁸ Michael Svennevig and others, *Godwatching: Viewers, Religion and Television* (London: Libbey, 1988), 12.

⁴⁹ Michael Slaughter, *Out on the Edge* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 25.

⁵⁰ John Dart, “Can Hollywood Teach and Inspire” found in *Christian Century*, March 22, 2003, 9-10.

like a natural evolution in the experience of this presenter. As generations and culture ask for different media to present the gospel message, it is hoped the church will respond in a useful way.

Theological Foundations

Theology of Spirituality

Theology and Spirituality must be employed simultaneously by the Church's leaders to have an authentic relationship with God and their flock. As the preacher continues to be transformed by this authentic relationship with God, then God may utilize this preacher to continue to transform the congregation. This authentic relationship is confirmed both by Karl Barth and Alfred Whitehead, theologians of Neo-Orthodoxy and Process Theology, respectively. These two theologies are at opposite ends of the theological spectrum on how they view God and God's control of the creation. Karl Barth says of humans and where their spiritual power originates: "They cannot have real power unless they arise from the realization that the Son of God has come in the flesh, that His Holy Ghost [Spirit] has been poured out upon the Church, and that the duty of speaking about God has been laid upon the Church."⁵¹ On the opposite end of the spectrum, Whitehead, who gives free choice to the humans from a wooing God who supplies a 'subjective aim,' says of God's actions: "The concrescence is directed by the subjective

⁵¹ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, trans. G.W. Bromiley (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 69.

aim, that the subjective forms of the feelings shall be such as to constitute the eternal objects into relevant lures of feeling* severally appropriate for all realizable basic conditions.”⁵² Beyond feeling, Whitehead further attributes the activity of the Holy Spirit to something beyond reason and statistical analysis to a mystical reality. “In this way, there can be an intuition of probability respecting the origination of some novelty. It is evident that the statistical theory entirely fails to provide any basis for judgments.”⁵³ Both of these men confirm the reality of a mystical presence and action by God, and this activity when combined with human beings intentionally focusing on this activity is defined as *spirituality*. This spirituality may take on many forms such as: lived discipleship, persons interacting with God, persons going into the world in the name of and on the behalf of God, and setting apart time and/or location to be alone with God.

This spirituality should include both personal alone time with God, and aiding the transformation of the world around those leaders serious about their call to ministry. Simon Chan enlightens the situation with this explanation. “Spirituality is the lived reality, whereas spiritual theology is the systematic reflection and formulization of the reality.”⁵⁴ It is the preacher’s job to combine the two, reality and reflection, into a usable, transformative process for the congregation. The preacher may do this by combining the ‘words’ and the ‘spirit’ for the congregation. “Phenomenological, spirituality can be described as a way of life that grows out of the structure of two basic components: the spirit and the word. The ‘spirit’ component consists of the non-rational, experiential

⁵² Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality, Corrected Edition*, ed. David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1979), 88.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 207.

⁵⁴ Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Theology And The Christian Spiritual Tradition* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 16.

reality often expressed in the sense of transcendence—the 'holy' or the 'real'. The 'word' component is the rational conceptualization of the transcendent experience expressed in theological formations and dogmas.⁵⁵ The sermon then helps this transcendence to become a reality for the hearers of the preached word. "Because God is the one God who is above all, transcendence can be a source of the Christian's deepest assurance that there is nothing that is not ultimately related to God. Because God is the triune God who is intimately related to each other and to the world in love, God's transcendence is an open transcendence that fills us with a sense of purpose rather than meaninglessness and despair."⁵⁶ This spirituality of the preacher then broadens from a singular act to the corporate community through this common act of worship of which the participants become a part. As Chan said, "In one sense, worship is not something we do, but something that happens to us in the face of divine self-disclosure."⁵⁷ This happening may call the congregants into action in the wider world in which they live because of this new relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Christians believe that as the incarnate Word of God, Jesus does not simply placard some useful information about God before the eyes of the world. If that were the case, one could respond to God's Word with a kind of polite neutrality. Instead, however, Jesus seems to confront persons with a very definite initiation and call for decision. In that sense it is a bit like a marriage proposal; the one receiving the proposal can reject it, but if the proposal is accepted, then an affirmative response that is real and full requires more than a benignly neutral assent - it requires entering into a new state of life.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, 20.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 45.

⁵⁷ Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, 115.

⁵⁸ Mark Allen McIntosh, *Mystical Theology: The Integrity Of Spirituality And Theology* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998), 155.

This new state of life offers Christians, empowered by the Holy Spirit, the opportunity to accept or reject Jesus because of the encounter of the preached word. "Christians believe that the Holy Spirit, who confronts them with this offer in the historical particularity of Jesus' existence, is also present in men and women of every era, race and nation, enabling them to hear and respond to this Word."⁵⁹ This Word is presented in one form by the preaching event, which makes evident to hearers the unseen God who is wooing them. "In noetic terms, this is expressed in an absolute knowledge of God and self which comes by way of surrendering human pre-judgments about either divine or human existence. In existential or affective terms, this is seen as a realization of the true self by way of abandoning the self to the divine Lover who seems hidden and absent."⁶⁰ The preaching event can make evident the presence of this unseen God.

Philip Sheldrake informs the community about living a life with God when he writes, "A theology that is alive is always grounded in spiritual experience. If it is to be complete, theology needs to be lived just as much as it needs to be studied and explained."⁶¹ This living of the theology tries to help the community express something unseen with the physical eye brought about in a symbolic manner from the community. "It may be that, from the point of view of Christian faith and Spirituality, postmodernism offers an important corrective to the tendency to believe that particular words are capable of saying what is the case about God in definitive ways. In reality all that we can ever do

⁵⁹ Ibid., 155.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 191.

⁶¹ Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality And Theology: Christian Living And The Doctrine Of God* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998), 3.

is to seek to express, haltingly, the inexpressible."⁶² That is, when a person or community tries to be unto themselves with their spirituality, they are missing the point of Jesus as God coming to the physical earth. "Spiritualities that are disengaged from the world rather than committed to it, and to its transformation, fail to reflect the irrevocable commitment of God to the world in Jesus Christ. This is what the doctrine of the incarnation seeks to express."⁶³ So the congregation and the preacher must engage the world through the media that is available, and one of those media available is the visual process during the sermon. "To seek God through images prevents us from losing touch with God's movement towards us in and through creation, through our own lives and in the incarnation."⁶⁴ What Philip Sheldrake is pointing to is that this spirituality that the preacher and congregation are attempting to address, should be addressed in a concrete way, such as communication via the preached word. Don E. Saliers in the book, *Spirituality & Worship*, reflects our interpretation of how we view God and what we do about it. "How we preach and how we pray and celebrate the mysteries of faith is an expression and a vulnerable exposure of what we believe about God and the world. What are we prepared to live and die for?"⁶⁵ This is a spirituality that needs to be developed, and one way to develop this is through solitude. "It is in solitude that we begin to discover our true self, and this begins with an awakening to the unreality of our false self. The desert [spirituality] is initially a negative encounter; it is a place where illusions are

⁶² Ibid., 10.

⁶³ Ibid., 16-17.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 26.

⁶⁵ Don E. Saliers, *Spirituality & Worship* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1984), 44.

smashed, the place of stripping, of unmasking, of purgation.⁶⁶ It is through this stripping and unmasking that the preacher becomes known to himself or herself and then can become authentic in the formulation and delivery of the sermon.

Sermon delivery may be inspired and formed by the Holy Spirit if the preacher allows the mystical presence to continue to transform the preacher and the congregation. This transformation may take on many forms of spirituality including alone time with God, living out the Word, going into the world, and interacting with God on many different levels. Many theologians from across the spectrum of beliefs, including Barth and Whitehead, confirm this spirituality. It is only the limitations of mere humans that limit the spirituality that can be perceived.

Homiletics: Purpose of Preaching

The purpose of preaching is not only to inform and educate Biblical principles, but it also may cause a person to be transformed into a human being more connected to God, the creator, as well as motivating that person to help transform their surrounding world. Preaching helps connect a person's life to the Bible and connect the unseen with the seen.

Alec Gilmore in his book, *Preaching as Theatre*, describes the purpose of preaching as follows:

⁶⁶ Kenneth Leech, *Experiencing God: Theology As Spirituality* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1985), 149.

The wife of a principal of a theological college was asked what she thought good preaching was since she had heard a lifetime of sermons. She said, "'the test of a good sermon for me is whether it makes me want to be a better person. . . . She was largely indifferent as to what he chose as text, . . . she would not mark him down for choosing the wrong subject or failing to touch on certain issues. . . . She was not looking for more information or knowledge; that would be teaching. She was not looking for guidance or direction. . . . She was not looking for a warm glow inside; that would be emotionalism. But she did want something that came from beyond and touched her feelings ('made her want . . .') and at the same time led her to a positive action over which she had some control."⁶⁷

Gilmore further says, "Preaching that is to make something happen must continually explore new ways of combining insights of the playwright and the liberation theologian so as to bring the hearers to the point to where they can say, 'This is my story - I could go up on stage right now and act it.' "⁶⁸ So one of the purposes of preaching is to motivate the hearer into positive action for God, that is, to create in the receiver the desire for the receiver to be like Jesus.

A good preacher also connects the present day situation to the past as recorded in the Bible, as well as the never ending Biblical truths that are presented; the preacher also should connect the unseen God with the visible, tangible world. This is a promise revealed by Ambrose in his preaching. "Ambrose felt that the transformation from unseeing to seeing, from things temporal to things eternal, from life in this world to divine life was promised to all Christians in the waters of baptism."⁶⁹ It is also believed

⁶⁷ Alec Gilmore, *Preaching as Theatre* (London: SCM Press, 1996), 1-2.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁶⁹ Craig Alan Satterlee, *Ambrose Of Milan's Method Of Mystagogical Preaching* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002), 285.

by this writer that this same promise could be delivered to those who are not baptized, since preaching is capable of many responses in many different people.

The preacher has many purposes for preaching which include nudging of the person listening to want to become a better person and taking positive action, connecting the Biblical stories and truths with the present day world, and connecting the unseen God with the world in which the congregation lives its life each day.

Homiletics: Preaching as an Art Form

It takes more than words and gestures to be a better than average preacher, to really transform and motivate the congregation. Effective preaching requires a delivery system that like a guided missile is able to strike at the heart of the target and is not deflected easily. This delivery system may take the form of great art, a theatrical performance, or may employ visual images that enable the hearer to more fully receive and comprehend the message God is transmitting through the preacher.

One way to transmit this message is for preaching to take on the form of great art. Leonora Tubbs Tisdale in her book, *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art*, says, "At its best, Christian preaching is not only an act of theological construction; it is also a work of art. Through its language, images, and form, preaching creates a world and invites the one hearing it to enter into it."⁷⁰ She says this because preaching is more than superfluous speech, but is connecting to the deep inner cores of people. "Good art is itself

⁷⁰ Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997), 122.

able to touch the deep places of the human soul, and to transcend distances of time and space through its symbolic address to the universals of human experience."⁷¹ It is interesting that art class is not taught in most seminaries, so preachers should perhaps learn how to become artists from a non-seminary source so they are able to transmit a whole message.

Jana Childers in her book, *Performing the Word: Preaching as Theatre*, tells the preacher how to become an artist. She proclaims that there are three intertwined disciplines that help form the foundation of the artist's creative process. They are concentration, observation, and imagination.⁷² The author has discovered that this creative process requires allocations of time. This preacher has also learned that to be creative, the artist must not only make time, but also make room and space in his life to allow the creative forces of concentration, observation, and imagination to work when forming a sermon. Armed with these skills, the preacher can deliver the sermon in artistic fashion to connect more deeply with her or his people. "Contextual congregational proclamation on Sunday mornings is a lot like a folk dance. The preacher functioning both as dancer and as leader in the dance, stays close to the ground of the local community, inviting and encouraging others to join the circle dance of faith. The sermon itself is a participatory act in which the preacher models a way of doing theology that meets people where they are, but that also encourages them to stretch themselves by trying new steps, new moves, new patterns of belief and action."⁷³ Along with this new

⁷¹ Ibid., 123.

⁷² Jana Childers, *Performing the Word: Preaching as Theatre* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 110-111.

⁷³ Tisdale, *Preaching as Local Theology*, 125.

presentation this new artist must be authentic while artistic. "'We want our preacher to preach like he believes what he's saying,' says a pastoral search committee. 'We don't like ministers who read their sermons,' says another."⁷⁴ It appears that some people do not desire a *read* sermon, but a delivered homily. It has also been shown that people would rather have style than an exact point-by-point delivery. At times, it is the artistic poem that touches people instead of the classic three points of a modern sermon.

The visual image is an artistic style that works well. "One of the most important ways that art shapes perception and experience is through the use of imagery."⁷⁵ Imagery is a very powerful tool for a preacher, and it can be presented with drama. "Drama and homiletics each have their root in the word, agnostic. The English words act, agitate, and agony are derived from the same Indo-European base *ag-*, 'to drive.' From this also comes the Latin *agere*, 'to do.'⁷⁶ This drama helps drive home the point the preacher is attempting to make. Drama also assists in retaining the attention of the listeners, and the visual helps to fully engage them in this drama.

Engagement of the listener to a more complete level is what adding these items to the preaching process is striving toward. The preacher has an important message from God that is worthy of the extra attention needed to add a fine art element, drama, and visual aids. Homiletics is more than just saying words; it is the embodiment of the audience as well as the preacher.

⁷⁴ Childers, *Performing the Word*, 18.

⁷⁵ Holland Dewitte Talmage, 1923- *The Preaching Tradition: a Brief History* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1980), 37.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 39-40.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Research Question

The question is how to engage people from the twenty-first century with the living God through worship, especially through the sermon event. The “talking head” or “read sermon” is no longer engaging enough to attract and/or hold the attention of the people who are visually bombarded by television and who use computers on a daily basis. Can an intentionally and spiritually disciplined preacher, employing a visually enhanced sermon, transform the congregation from passive/neutral receivers to a congregation that is more connected to God?

The focus of the project was to measure how listeners, while receiving a sermon by an intentionally spiritually disciplined preacher, were more transformed and more fully engaged by their God-given physical and spiritual senses.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis was that a spiritually disciplined preacher who was continuously transformed by the Holy Spirit and employing a visually stimulating sermon will transform a congregation more fully. These spiritual disciplines included daily prayer, Scripture reading, meditation, and devotional reading. The visual stimulation came primarily from an engaging PowerPoint presentation using a computer with a wireless mouse, a video projector, and a screen during the sermon event.

Research Design

The design of the project was to use a spiritually disciplined preacher and the visual content of a sermon presentation, and then measure the transformation of the congregation who has experienced the sermon.

The Context Associates helped develop the questions for the surveys of the congregation, interviews with selected persons in the congregation, and focus groups. The Professional Associates continuously advised the researcher on matters of resources, preaching methodology, and the spiritual disciplines for the preacher.

The Preacher spent an increased amount of time each day in disciplined spiritual preparation for the upcoming Sunday's sermon, not including actual sermon formulation. This time of preparation included devotional reading, Bible reading, prayer, and silent meditation. The increased time was above the average normal time spent before the

project was conducted. Also during each week, the preacher developed a sermon employing Power Point presentation graphics using previously used effective pictures and themes as well as new material. This preacher before this project had delivered these sermons, in some form.

Instrumentation

The research utilized Context Associates selected from the congregation of Rosedale Hills United Methodist Church, Indianapolis, Indiana. This was a unique context since the congregation had never, or rarely, experienced a sermon augmented by a PowerPoint presentation. The Context Associates were composed of the Staff Parish Relations Committee, a committee designed to be a cross section of the entire church. The United Methodist *Book Of Discipline* specifies the wide composition of this body in its Paragraph 258.2: "The committee shall be composed of not fewer than five nor more than nine persons representative of the total charge. One of the members shall be a young adult and one member may be a youth. In addition, the lay leader and a lay member of the annual conference shall be members. No staff member or immediate family member of a pastor or staff member may serve on the committee. Only one person from an immediate family residing in the same household shall serve on the committee."¹

These Context Associates helped write the questions to survey the congregation on what was most effective sermon delivery by means of spiritual preparation and visual

¹ Harriett Jane Olson, Book Editor of the United Methodist Church, *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2000* (Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2000), 164.

presentation. The one-on-one interview questions and focus group questions were the same as the congregational questions. The members were Lori Coffin, Jan Amonette, David Dunse, Phyllis Smith, Tom Hathaway, Marlys Sewall, Shelly Alexander, Angi Wright, Suzy Wright, Ron Bolyard, II, Dick Hilfiker, and Tom Lytle.

Professional Associates were used to augment the formulation of the spiritual component, the visual components, data formulation and collection, and aided in the writing of documents. They were: Rev. Dr. Adolf Hansen, recently retired New Testament Studies Professor and Administrator from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary; Rev. Dr. Frederick D. Hill, retired professor from University of Indianapolis; and Rev. Dr. Tony Underwood, recent DMin graduate United Theological Seminary who also studied at the Fuqua School of Preaching on Robert Schuler's campus in California.

Intervention

The aim of this project was to offer the congregation a more complete form of presentation of the message, the interpreted Word, utilizing not only the spoken word and gestures, but also using visual images. Employing computers, video projectors, and a screen, the presenter created an *Electronic Stained Glass Window* that could be changed several times throughout a sermon presentation. There were four sermons on the first four consecutive Sundays in February 2004. The reason for choosing this time frame was to minimize fluctuations in congregational attendance. These four Sundays were in between Christmas and Lent so the constantly faithful were in regular attendance, and outside visitors were minimal to reduce the variable input onto the sermon survey.

The weekly sequence of events to develop this preaching style was for the preacher to increase his spiritual life, develop the sermon, and then create an artistic visual presentation to augment the words and gestures of the preacher.

The sermon itself consisted of moves as defined by David Buttrick in his book, *Homiletic: Moves and Structures*, where he says; “Sermons are a movement of language from one idea to another, each idea being shaped in a bundle of words. Thus, when we preach we speak in formed modules of language arranged in some patterned sequence. These modules of language we will call *moves*.² Then with each *move*, a visual image was produced and presented in a PowerPoint presentation to augment the spoken word. An excellent example of this is when a *move* speaks about Jesus, then a picture of Jesus is used, or using a *move* involving a *cultural link*³ such as McDonald’s with a picture of one of their restaurants. A cultural link is a connector that employs a present day event, item, establishment, or concept that provides a link or handle to help people remember a Biblical concept. This is different from most visual presentations that accompany a sermon where a theme picture is employed along with an outline or bullet points. Examples of this new type of sermon presentation involving illustrated moves may be viewed in Appendices D, E, F, and G. Another important feature employed in these sermon presentations, was the creation of a point in the sermon that may be called the God moment. This is a moment in the delivery that the people feel the presence of God. This happens usually when the preacher talks from the heart and is not referring to a

² David Buttrick, *Homiletic: Moves and Structures* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress press, 1987), 23.

³ Timothy F. Merrill, exec. ed., “Coming Next Issue,” *Homiletics*, May-June 2004, 7.

picture or a series of pictures. In Appendices D, E, F, and G, these moments were planned and annotated in the notes by, “expand on this.”

Sermon Survey Development

The Context Associates met and reviewed and discussed communication models as presented by H. David Schuringa in his book, Hearing the Word in a Visual Age: A Practical Theological Consideration of Preaching within the Contemporary Urge to Visualization. The models studied were The Lasswell Model, The Shannon and Weaver Model, The Osgood and Schramm Model, and The Pierce Model. These models explore the various linear and circular flows of communication in the preaching event. See Appendix C for diagrams of the models. This was done to help familiarize them with how communications happen and why. The Context Associates then assimilated the survey questions for the study group, the congregation of Rosedale Hills United Methodist Church. They looked at several surveys from other resources and picked the following questions.

“How was the sermon relevant to the Scripture text?”⁴

“What do you think was the main point of the sermon?”⁵

⁴ Rev. Dr. Stan Strosahl, “Sermon Response Form.” unpublished handout from the Wisconsin Town and Country Intern/Student Program with Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois, 1994.

⁵ Gary B. Reirson, *The Art in Preaching: The Intersection of Theology, Worship, and Preaching with the Arts* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 1988), 86.

“The point of this sermon was clear to me.”⁶

“The preacher held my attention through the sermon by.”⁷

“Rating sheet of emotions, *Melism* (immediate feelings)

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Undecided</i>
Audience rapport	()	()	()	()
Creativity	()	()	()	()
Preparedness	()	()	()	()
Self-confidence	()	()	()	()
Will to communicate”	()	()	()	⁸

“How was the sermon relevant to you? To the congregation?”⁹

“Body Rating sheet: The physical activity

	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Very poor</i>	
Gestures	()	()	()	()	()	() Mannerisms ()
Change of position	()	()	()	()	()	() Mannerisms ()
Use of notes	()	()	()	()	()	() Mannerisms ()
Facial expression	()	()	()	()	()	
Eye contact	()	()	()	()	()	¹⁰

⁶ Etta Jane Murphy, “An Investigation of the Relationship between the effectiveness of Communication in the Preaching Event and Personality Type as Measured by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.” Ph.D. diss., Christian Theological Seminary, 1985, 98.

⁷ Ibid., 98.

⁸ Dwight E. Stevenson and Charles F. Diehl, *Reaching People from the Pulpit: A Guide to Effective Sermon Delivery* (Harper & Brothers, NY: 1958), 135.

⁹ Strosahl, “Sermon Response Form.”

¹⁰ Stevenson, *Reaching People from the Pulpit*, 134.

“What in the sermon especially caught your ear, moved you, or engaged you in some significant way, that is, what in the sermon was crucial to your getting the message? (Some examples: an image, an idea, a story, a statistic, a metaphor, a fact, etc.) Why?”¹¹

“How did the visual presentation help/hinder you in understanding the sermon?”¹²

“How were you motivated to take some action by this sermon?”¹³

A survey was then formed from these questions and is attached to this report in Appendix A.

Measurement

The measurement of the data was collected from a one-group post-test sample. The group was defined as the members of the congregation attending the four worship services during the four weeks of the project. This group varied due to fluctuation of attendance, but to minimize these variances, the project was conducted in the month of February 2004. The Context Associates were not a part of the group questioned. The measurement was accomplished by surveys of the congregation, interviews with selected persons in the congregation, and focus groups. These different inputs were done on each Sunday after the sermon was presented.

A random sampling was utilized to select and invite participants for the interviews and the focus groups. Using information from the book by John W. Creswell,

¹¹ Reirson, *The Art in Preaching*, 86.

¹² Strosahl, “Sermon Response Form.”

¹³ Murphy, “An Investigation of the Relationship,” 98.

Research Design, the following observation methods and groups were designed. The entire congregation present during the project was the participants. They received a survey questionnaire sheet to fill out either during or after the sermon, and they were turned in to the data collector, a Context Associate, before leaving the building that day. This is gathering information by *observation*, “in which the researcher takes field notes on the behavior and activities of individuals at the research site. In these field notes, the researcher records, in an unstructured or semi-structured way (using some prior questions that the inquirer wants to know), the activities at the research site.”¹⁴ Accordingly, the advantages for this observation method of qualitative research are: 1) Researcher can record information as it is revealed. 2) Unusual aspects can be noticed during observation. 3) It is useful in exploring topics that may be uncomfortable for participants to discuss. The limitations of this type of the observations are: 1) Researcher may be seen as intrusive. 2) ‘Private’ information may be observed that the researcher cannot report. 3) Researcher may not have good attending and observing skills. 4) Certain participants (e.g., children) may present special problems in gaining rapport.”¹⁵ After evaluating these pros and cons, it was decided to use this method of observation.

For validating the accuracy of the congregational surveys, focus groups and one-on-one interviews were used to triangulate the data as suggested by John Creswell who wrote, “In a limited way, qualitative researchers can use reliability to check for consistent patterns of theme development among several investigators on a team.”¹⁶ The researcher

¹⁴ John W. Creswell, *Research Design*, 2d ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003), 185 and 188.

¹⁵ Ibid., 186.

¹⁶ Ibid., 195.

was looking for consistency among the answers using triangulations of data. Creswell states, “Triangulate different data sources of information by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification of themes.”¹⁷ By employing all three groups during the observations, a triangulation of data was achieved.

The interviewed persons and groups were structured in accordance with the advice of Creswell. “In *interviews*, the researcher conducts face-to-face interviews with participants, interviews participants by telephone, or engages in focus group interviews with six to eight interviewees in each group. These interviews involve unstructured and generally open-ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants.”¹⁸ The advantage of the interview method in the qualitative research model is that it “allows researcher ‘control’ over the line of questioning.”¹⁹ The disadvantages of that method are that it “provides information in a designated ‘place’ rather than the natural field setting [sanctuary] [and] people are not equally articulate and perceptive.”²⁰

The prospective field for the focus group was chosen by randomly selecting a starting point in the most complete roster of the congregation available. The starting point was selected by throwing two dice, and at that number, the count began. Then every tenth person was selected to be asked if they would be available and willing to participate in the focus group. The tenth person was chosen since there were 273 persons on the roster

¹⁷ Ibid., 196.

¹⁸ Ibid., 188.

¹⁹ Ibid., 186.

²⁰ Ibid., 186.

and it was felt that approximately twenty-seven people were needed to obtain eight willing and available members of the focus group. Next, the list of twenty-seven was counted by three's and the persons with a "one" beside their name were asked first to join the focus group, then the names with a "two," and then the names with a "three" were asked last. This was done to provide randomness in this short list. The same procedure was used for selecting the one-on-one interviewees. Randomness was used to select the individuals so they would be most representative of the whole population (congregation).

"A sample will be representative of the population from which it is selected, if all members of the population have an equal chance of being selected in the sample."²¹ Babbie further states, "Surveys of organizations are often the simplest from a sampling standpoint because organizations typically have membership lists. In such cases, the lists of members constitute an excellent sampling frame. If a random sample is selected from the membership list, the data collected from that sample may be taken as representative of all members—*if all members are included in the list.*"²² The roll of the two dice was used to enter randomness into the selection process as well. "To insure against any possible human bias in using this method [systematic sample with a random start], the researcher selects the first element at random."²³ It was felt that the interviewees for this project were as random and representative as feasibly possible within the acceptable parameters.

²¹ Earl R. Babbie, *Survey Research Methods* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1973), 78.

²² *Ibid.*, 89.

²³ *Ibid.*, 94.

To aid in preparing all the sample groups including the congregation, a newsletter article was sent to all members and verbal announcements were made at various leadership meetings. The newsletter stated,

Preaching with PowerPoint, “The Electronic Stained Glass Window. As many of you know, Rosedale Hills will be part of a Doctoral research project with Pastor Doug in his Doctor of Ministry program. During the month of February pastor Doug will preach sermons supplemented with video presentation utilizing PowerPoint. He calls it the “Electronic Stained Glass Window.” The purpose of this project is to attempt to measure the response to a visually enhanced sermon of an entire congregation. Each week, all those in the congregation will be asked to fill out an evaluation form and turn them in before leaving that Sunday. In addition, some will be randomly selected to participate in focus groups and interview sessions. These groups will be used to validate the data from the congregation and gain more insight to the response of the sermon. After a list is randomly generated from the new completed directory, these people will be asked if they are willing to commit to attending all four services and an interview session early in each of those four weeks. Thank you for your help.²⁴

With all of these items in place, the presenter prepared himself spiritually, the four sermons were presented, and the surveys taken.

²⁴ Douglas Walker, “Preaching with PowerPoint, The Electronic Stained Glass Window” in *The Newscaster*, February 1, 2004, 1.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

Data Collection

Data collection was from a one-group post-test. Data was collected from congregational surveys after the sermon delivery, and the interviews and focus group's responses were completed shortly after the worship experience to correlate the responses.

Data Analysis

The general congregational surveys were collected immediately following the service, and the two correlation groups of focus group and one-on-one interviewers convened immediately after the worship experience and recorded their responses.

The questions were collected into groups where a subjective measurement was used to determine whether the response was positive, negative, or neutral. Neutral was also recorded if there was a blank response, a question mark was employed, or the

response indicated that no decision has been made. To remove some bias in the researcher evaluation alone, the Peer Associates and the Context Associates also performed the subjective evaluation of positive, negative, or neutral to triangulate the subjective analysis of the questions. See results in Appendix B, Tables 4 to 9. This second triangulation in evaluating the responses was used to reduce the subjectivity error infused by just one evaluator. These results were then averaged together for a final result. The overall average positive result was 77% for the response to the visuals during the sermon. The neutral response was 17%, and the negative response was 6%. See Appendix B, Table 2. The averaged response to the whether the congregation was spiritually motivated to positive action was 60% positive, 39% neutral, and negative was 2%. See Appendix B, Table 3.

To evaluate the surveys for visual response, the answers from question numbers three, four, seven, and eight were used. Those questions were: “3. How was the point of this sermon made clear to you?” “4. The preacher held my attention through the sermon by:” “7. What in the sermon especially caught your ear, moved you, or engaged you in some significant way, that is, what in the sermon was crucial to your getting the message? (Some examples: an image, an idea, a story, a statistic, a metaphor, a fact, etc.) Why?” “8. How did the visual presentation help/hinder you in understanding the sermon?” See Appendix A. These four questions answered the overall question, “*Did the visuals help the hearer to focus or capture the thesis of the sermon?*” In the congregational survey, the four-week average was 78% for a positive response, 18% for a neutral response, and 4% for a negative response. See Appendix B, Table 4. This

correlated very well with the one-on-one interview group with an average of 76% positive, 20% neutral, and 4% negative. See Appendix B, Table 10. Comments from both groups were generally similar to, "Good illustrations, and the seven points on the screen were helpful focus." "The visuals helped bring pictures to mind about the sermon topic." "Two senses are always better than one." "Pictures brought the sermon to life." These comments, along with the statistics, point to a positive experience with the visuals during a sermon.

The focus group had technical difficulties with the audio tape recorder during the sessions on February 8th and 15th, but the overall consensus of the group from the responses on February 1st and 22nd corroborated the results of the other two groups. During the discussion of the focus group, there were more factors cited such as body movement and eye contact; but they did concur that the visual presentation helped the overall connection and reception of the sermon. These other factors were tabulated in the last Sunday's (February 22) survey and it was discovered the other factors were mentioned only at a rate that was half or less of the visual response. See Appendix B, Table 12. The next two factors that aided in the receiving of the sermon were the ideas presented and the congregation feeling connected with the pastor such as conversational style or eye contact. The strong visual response may be due to the sample knowing the purpose of the questions, but the data indicate that a visually enhanced sermon does help hold the focus and attention of the congregation.

To somewhat measure spirituality and how the congregation was moved by the experience, the following two questions were used in the survey. "9. How was the

sermon relevant to you? To the congregation? 10. How were you motivated to take some action by this sermon?" The written responses were also coded into categories of positive, negative, and neutral, and then measured against the overall question, "Was the hearer motivated to do something because of the sermon, and hopefully by the Spirit, a hard to measure response?" The congregational survey showed that a four-week average for positive effect was 59%, a response of 40% for neutral or no effect, and 1% responded with a negative effect. See Appendix B, Table 5. The one-on-one interview group tended toward a more positive response than the general congregational survey. The one-on-one interview group responded to the question of motivation to take action with a 73% positive, 23% neutral, and 4% negative. See Appendix B, Table 11. This is more closely correlated to the overall response averages for the visual presentation. The lesser motivation by the general congregation could be due to their aggregate motivational response, which would have been less than a one-on-one interview group who were randomly selected. This group included only those motivated enough to do the more intense one-on-one interview group work. The focus group also correlated positive motivation by most members.

Other Observations

The Context Associates thought it would be interesting to include survey information about age factor and visual hymns. Part of that decision was for administrative purposes to help this church, the context, to decide whether to purchase and utilize video projection on a full time basis.

As a part of the visual presentation and survey, the hymns were also projected on the screen displaying words and music sometimes and only the words at other times. The congregation, the focus group, and the one on one interviews were surveyed using the same sheet [Appendix A]. The results from the congregation to all the hymns on the screen were positive, but not as positive as the sermon presentation. The positive responses were averaged to 65%, the neutral responses averaged 23%, and the negative averaged 12%. See Appendix B, Table 13. Preference for display type averaged 46% for words only, 19% average for words with music, and neutral average response was 36%. See Appendix B, Table 14. Several comments about words with music were that they were too hard to read.

Age factor was also surveyed and according to the data collected, age did not make a difference in choosing positive or neutral response to the sermons or hymns enhanced by the visual presentation. The highest percentage of negative responses was in the age group forty to fifty-five year olds. Comments from this group included that they missed the contemplative [traditional] style of worship.

Conclusion

Based on the data collected, it is suggested that a spiritually disciplined preacher utilizing a visual presentation method does indeed more effectively deliver a message and motivate the congregation to grow closer to God. This would then indicate that they, too, have been touched by the Spirit and, hopefully, have been transformed by God.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION

Because of this project, this researcher has spent much more time with God than previously spent on a daily basis. In spending more daily time reading the Word, doing different meditations, and reflecting on God and the Spirit, this writer has been transformed which was a goal of this project. Hopefully, the Context, the Context Associates, Peers, and Professional Associates have also been transformed due to the actions of the Spirit working throughout this whole project. Because of the Spirit-led visual displays during the sermon event, the data has shown that the transmittal of God's message has been more effective.

This project has shown that a spiritually disciplined preacher who uses a visual display during the sermon event does impact, in a positive way, the congregation. Ninety-four percent of the congregation of this context in this project accepted the presentation by either positively reacting to the presentation or reporting a neutral feedback. It is interesting that only 6% indicated a negative reaction to the visual displays. This was due, in general, to their preference of a more sedate, contemplative approach to worship as indicated by their written responses on the questionnaires. It is also interesting that the

majority of this group were in the age group of forty to fifty year olds. These are of the baby boomer generation who probably grew up in the classic traditional style of worship in the 1950's and 1960's. Conversely, a seventy year old man told me he did not care for the new visual contemporary style, but did not indicate negatively because he realized the new generation liked the new style. I think this indicates that people of the older generation are more willing to accommodate new styles of worship to help younger generations find, grow, and mature in the faith.

This insight to age preferences was added during the course of the project as well as the survey of acceptance of adding hymns to the projected screen. This was created during the formulation of the questionnaire. The Context Associates thought both of these ideas would gather pertinent and useful information, and both of the results were very revealing as to acceptance of the visual screen. It showed this researcher that people respond well to the words of the hymns on the projected screen. There was a discussion of whether the music notes and staff should be included in the presentation of the hymn. It was pointed out by an educator of music in the public school system that the music programs in the public school system were derived from the lack of music reading in the church in an earlier time. It was learned that the people in the pews did not exhibit an overwhelming preference for words only or words with music. What was learned, though, was that the ability to see and read the information was most important. This was learned from the comments about not being able to read the words when the music was displayed with them. Technically, we were not able to display words and music so that both could be seen well simultaneously. This is something that could be worked on: the ability to project words and music together.

One can also learn from the negative comments. There were comments such as “Distracted me from a closer communion with God,” “The pictures of the dogs made me think of mine at home and how I missed him,” and “ It is difficult to follow the pastor and view photos at the same time.” These comments indicate something that this presenter was made aware of in the last context when a parishioner said she wanted more than just pictures. This indicated to this author that the pictures are not the main things, but they are to supplement what is said. It has been learned that at some point in the sermon and slide presentation, the preacher must stop the show and talk from his or her heart. In the notes on one or two slides in each sermon Appendices D, E, F, and G there is a note to expand on this slide and subject. This is the point in those sermons at which the preacher talked for a few minutes and attempted to connect heart to heart with the people. This is called the God moment. Another way to look at this connection is to let God speak through the preacher directly to the people. The preacher becomes the *earthen vessel* for God to speak. It has been found that congregations respond very well to this type of communication, and this was attempted on all four of these sermons presented during the project.

A very interesting continuation of this project would be to conduct a post study with this context and also study and measure other contexts. This context had never experienced a visually presented sermon before this time, and it would be interesting to survey them again since some time has past without the visual component. It would also be very worthy of the effort to survey a congregation that had been experiencing this method for some time before doing the survey to see if the results were different and by how much.

Hopefully, this project has been designed and reported so that other pastors, churches, and governing bodies may use this information to help them evaluate whether to employ a visual presentation in their worship service. The visuals have always been used by God and by God's people, but this electronic means is just starting to be employed.

We know from the writings of past leaders in the church that the more spiritually connected the presenter is, the more transformed the recipients will be. Many of the people who reviewed this project before its initiation stated that the spiritual component would probably carry this project more than the visual presentation, but that component would be hard to measure since God is hard to measure. One could ask, does the transformation require both components, or would one component, either spiritual discipline or visual enhancement, be sufficient? Another project, or many, could separate these components and measure the response of that context. The Lord works in many and various ways; and so we, as leaders in the church, must continue to attempt to measure all of those ways knowing we would not exhaust all the ways. Our task is to continue to try and to research, and let God be God.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Date: _____

Preacher: _____

Sermon Survey

1. How was the sermon relevant to the Scripture text?

2. What do you think was the main point of the sermon?

3. How was the point of this sermon made clear to you?

4. The preacher held my attention through the sermon by:

5. My immediate feelings about the pastor, today, were (circle one):

Audience rapport: Very Good Good Average Poor Very Poor

Creativity: Very Good Good Average Poor Very Poor

Preparedness: Very Good Good Average Poor Very Poor

Self-confidence: Very Good Good Average Poor Very Poor

Will to communicate: Very Good Good Average Poor Very Poor

Comments:

Your age range? Below 12 _____ Ages 13-19 _____ Ages 20-29 _____

Ages 30-39 _____ Ages 40-55 _____ Ages 56-70 _____ Over 71 _____

6. The physical activity of the pastor was (circle one):

Gestures:	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Change of position:	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Use of voice:	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Facial expression:	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Eye contact:	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor

Comments:

7. What in the sermon especially caught your ear, moved you, or engaged you in some significant way, that is, what in the sermon was crucial to your getting the message? (Some examples: an image, an idea, a story, a statistic, a metaphor, a fact, etc.) Why?

8. How did the visual presentation help/hinder you in understanding the sermon?

9. How was the sermon relevant to you? To the congregation?

10. How were you motivated to take some action by this sermon?

I liked the hymns on the video screen. Yes _____; No _____; Don't care _____

I prefer the: Words only _____; Words with music _____; Don't Care _____

APPENDIX B

SURVEY RESULTS TABLES

Table 2
Response to Sermon with PowerPoint
based on Answers to #3, #4, #7, & #8 from Congregation
“Did the visuals help the hearer to focus or capture the thesis of the sermon?”

<u>Survey Evaluator</u>	Evaluated Averages		
	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Negative</u>
Researcher	78%	18%	4%
Context Associates	74%	18%	8%
Peer Group	79%	16%	5%
Averages	77%	17%	6%

Table 3
Motivated to take action from Answers to #9 & #10 by Congregation
*“Was the hearer motivated to do something because of the sermon
and hopefully by the Spirit, a hard to measure response?”*

<u>Survey Evaluator</u>	Evaluated Averages		
	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Negative</u>
Researcher	59%	40%	1%
Context Associates	60%	37%	3%
Peer Group	na	na	na
Averages	60%	39%	2%

Table 4
Response to Sermon with PowerPoint
based on Answers to #3, #4, #7, & #8 from Congregation
“Did the visuals help the hearer to focus or capture the thesis of the sermon?”

Evaluated by Researcher						
		<u>Positive</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Responded</u>	<u>Total</u>
2/1/2004	Congregation	52 79%	9 14%	5 8%	66 48%	137
2/8/2004	Congregation	38 76%	10 20%	2 4%	50 34%	149
2/15/2004	Congregation	27 77%	7 20%	1 3%	35 27%	129
2/22/2004	Congregation	29 78%	7 19%	1 3%	37 28%	130
Average, 4 weeks		78%	18%	4%		

Table 5
Motivated to take action from Answers to #9 & #10 by Congregation
*“Was the hearer motivated to do something because of the sermon
and hopefully by the Spirit, a hard to measure response?”*

Evaluated by Researcher						
		<u>Positive</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Responded</u>	<u>Total</u>
12/1/2004	Congregation	32 48%	32 48%	2 3%	66 48%	137
2/8/2004	Congregation	31 62%	19 38%	0 0%	50 34%	149
2/15/2004	Congregation	20 57%	14 40%	1 3%	35 27%	129
2/22/2004	Congregation	25 68%	12 32%	0 0%	37 28%	130
Average, 4 weeks		59%	40%	1%		

Table 6
Response to Sermon with PowerPoint
based on Answers to #3, #4, #7, & #8 from Congregation
“Did the visuals help the hearer to focus or capture the thesis of the sermon?”

	Evaluated by Context Associates				
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	No.	Total
Attendance					
Congregation	51	10	5	66	137
	77%	15%	8%	48%	
Congregation	38	7	5	50	149
	76%	14%	10%	34%	
Congregation	28	5	2	35	129
	80%	14%	6%	27%	
Congregation	23	11	3	37	130
	62%	30%	8%	28%	
Average, 4 weeks	74%	18%	8%		

Table 7
Motivated to take action from Answers to #9 & #10 by Congregation
*“Was the hearer motivated to do something because of the sermon
and hopefully by the Spirit, a hard to measure response?”*

	Evaluated by Context Associates				
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	No.	Total
Attendance					
Congregation	32	31	3	66	137
	48%	47%	5%	48%	
Congregation	29	21	0	50	149
	58%	42%	0%	34%	
Congregation	25	9	1	35	129
	71%	26%	3%	27%	
Congregation	23	13	1	37	130
	62%	35%	3%	28%	
Average, 4 weeks	60%	37%	3%		

Response to Sermon with PowerPoint
based on Answers to #3, #4, #7, & #8 from Congregation
“Did the visuals help the hearer to focus or capture the thesis of the sermon?”

Evaluated by Peers						
		<u>Positive</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Responded</u>	<u>Total</u>
					<u>No.</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
2/1/2004	Congregation	50	14	2	66	137
		76%	21%	3%	48%	
2/8/2004	Congregation	40	5	5	50	149
		80%	10%	10%	34%	
2/15/2004	Congregation	28	6	1	35	129
		80%	17%	3%	27%	
2/22/2004	Congregation	29	6	2	37	130
		78%	16%	5%	28%	
Average, 4 weeks		79%	16%	5%		

Table 9
Motivated to take action from Answers to #9 & #10 by Congregation
*“Was the hearer motivated to do something because of the sermon
and hopefully by the Spirit, a hard to measure response?”*

Evaluated by Peers						
		<u>Positive</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Responded</u>	<u>Total</u>
					<u>No.</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
12/1/2004	Congregation	50	13	3	66	137
		76%	20%	5%	48%	
2/8/2004	Congregation	40	10	0	50	149
		80%	20%	0%	34%	
2/15/2004	Congregation	28	5	2	35	129
		80%	14%	6%	27%	
2/22/2004	Congregation	26	10	1	37	130
		70%	27%	3%	28%	
Average, 4 weeks		77%	20%	3%		

Table 10
Response to Sermon with PowerPoint
based on Answers to #3, #4, #7, & #8 from Interviews
“Did the visuals help the hearer to focus or capture the thesis of the sermon?”

		<u>Positive</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Responded</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Attendance</u>
2/1/2004	Interviews	5	2	0	7	7
		71%	29%	0%	100%	
2/8/2004	Interviews	5	1	0	6	7
		83%	17%	0%	86%	
2/15/2004	Interviews	3	2	1	6	6
		50%	33%	17%	100%	
2/22/2004	Interviews	4	0	0	4	6
		100%	0%	0%	67%	
Average, 4 weeks		76%	20%	4%		

Table 11
Motivated to take action from Answers to #9 & #10 from Interviews
*“Was the hearer motivated to do something because of the sermon
and hopefully by the Spirit, a hard to measure response?”*

		<u>Positive</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Responded</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Attendance</u>
2/1/2004	Interviews	4	3	0	7	7
		57%	43%	0%	100%	
2/8/2004	Interviews	3	3	0	6	7
		50%	50%	0%	86%	
2/15/2004	Interviews	5	0	1	6	6
		83%	0%	17%	100%	
2/22/2004	Interviews	4	0	0	4	6
		100%	0%	0%	67%	
Average, 4 weeks		73%	23%	4%		

Table 12
Survey of Other Factors: Sermon from 2-22-04

Congregational

Table 13
Response to Hymns with PowerPoint from Congregation

	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>No. Responded</u>	<u>Total Attendance</u>
2/1/2004	47 71%	5 8%	14 21%	66 48%	137
2/8/2004	35 70%	10 20%	5 10%	50 34%	149
2/15/2004	20 57%	13 37%	2 6%	35 27%	129
2/22/2004	23 62%	10 27%	4 11%	37 28%	130
Average, 4 weeks	65%	23%	12%		

Table 14
**Response to Hymn Display Type with PowerPoint
from Congregation**

	<u>Only Words</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Words Music</u>	<u>Responded</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
2/1/2004	31 48%	18 28%	16 25%	65 47%	137
2/8/2004	20 40%	20 40%	10 20%	50 34%	149
2/15/2004	17 49%	12 34%	6 17%	35 27%	129
2/22/2004	17 46%	15 41%	5 14%	37 28%	130
Average, 4 weeks	46%	36%	19%		

Table 15
Response to Hymns with PowerPoint
from One on One Interviews

	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>No. Responded</u>	<u>Total Attendance</u>
2/1/2004	3 43%	4 57%	0 0%	7 100%	7
2/8/2004	3 50%	2 33%	1 17%	6 86%	7
2/15/2004	2 33%	3 50%	1 17%	6 100%	6
2/22/2004	2 50%	2 50%	0 0%	4 67%	6
Average, 4 weeks	44%	48%	8%		

Table 16
Response to Hymn Display Type with PowerPoint
from One on One Interviews

	<u>Only Words</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Words Music</u>	<u>No. Responded</u>	<u>Total Attendance</u>
2/1/2004	3 43%	2 29%	2 29%	7 100%	7
2/8/2004	3 50%	3 50%	0 0%	6 86%	7
2/15/2004	2 33%	3 50%	1 17%	6 100%	6
2/22/2004	0 0%	3 75%	1 25%	4 67%	6
Average, 4 weeks	32%	51%	18%		

Table 17
Congregational Survey Response by Age

Response to Visuals in Sermon

Evaluated by Peers

		12 & Under	13-19	20-29	30-39	40-55	56-70	71 & Over	no answer	Total
Sermon from 2-1-04	Positive		2	3	7	13	13	11	1	50
	Negative						2			2
	Neutral				1		4	7	2	14
Sermon from 2-8-04	Positive		3	5	5	7	14	6		40
	Negative				1	1	1	2		5
	Neutral					1	2	2		5
Sermon from 2-15-04	Positive	1			3	2	6	7	7	28
	Negative						1			1
	Neutral				2		1	3		6
Sermon from 2-22-04	Positive		1		3	8	10	6	1	29
	Negative			1		1				2
	Neutral		1			1	2	1	1	6
Column Total		1	7	13	20	45	57	40	5	188
Age Category Responding of Total %		0.53	3.72	6.91	10.6	23.9	30.3	21.3	2.66	
Summary										
Age Category Responding %	Positive	1	6	11	17	34	44	30	4	147
		100	85.7	84.6	85.0	75.6	77.2	75.0	80.0	
Age Category Responding %	Negative	0	0	1	1	5	1	2	0	10
		0.0	0.0	7.7	5.0	11.1	1.8	5.0	0.0	
Age Category Responding %	Neutral	0	1	1	2	6	12	8	1	31
		0.0	14.3	7.7	10.0	13.3	21.1	20.0	20.0	

Table 18
Congregational Survey Response by Age

Hymns on PowerPoint

	12 & Under	13-19	20-29	30-39	40-55	56-70	71 & Over	no answer	Total
									Positive
Hymns on 2-1-04									2 4 6 9 14 10 1 46
									1 3 1 5
									7 5 3 15
Hymns on 2-8-04									3 4 4 4 14 6 35
									1 4 5
									1 2 3 4 10
Hymns on 2-15-04									1 3 2 3 5 7 21
									2
									2 2 3 3 2 12
Hymns on 2-22-04									2 2 4 10 5 23
									1 3 3 4
									1 3 2 2 2 10
Category Responding	Column Total	1	7	13	19	46	57	40	5 188
Category Responding	%	0.5	3.7	6.9	10	24	30	21	
	Summary								
Age Category Responding	Positive	1	7	11	14	20	43	28	1 125
	%	100	100	84.6	73.7	43.5	75.4	70.0	66.5
Age Category Responding	Negative	0	0	2	1	12	1	0	0 16
	%	0.0	0.0	15.4	5.3	26.1	1.8	0.0	8.5
Age Category Responding	Neutral	0	0	0	4	14	13	12	4 47
	%	0.0	0.0	0.0	21.1	30.4	22.8	30.0	25.0

APPENDIX C

COMMUNICATION MODELS PRESENTED

Communication Models

From

Hearing the Word in a Visual Age: A Practical Theological Consideration of Preaching within the Contemporary Urge to Visualization

By

H. David Schuringa

Who? —> Says What? —> In which channel? —> To Whom —> With what effect?

The Lasswell Model (1948)

This model is linear and answers the questions presented in it.

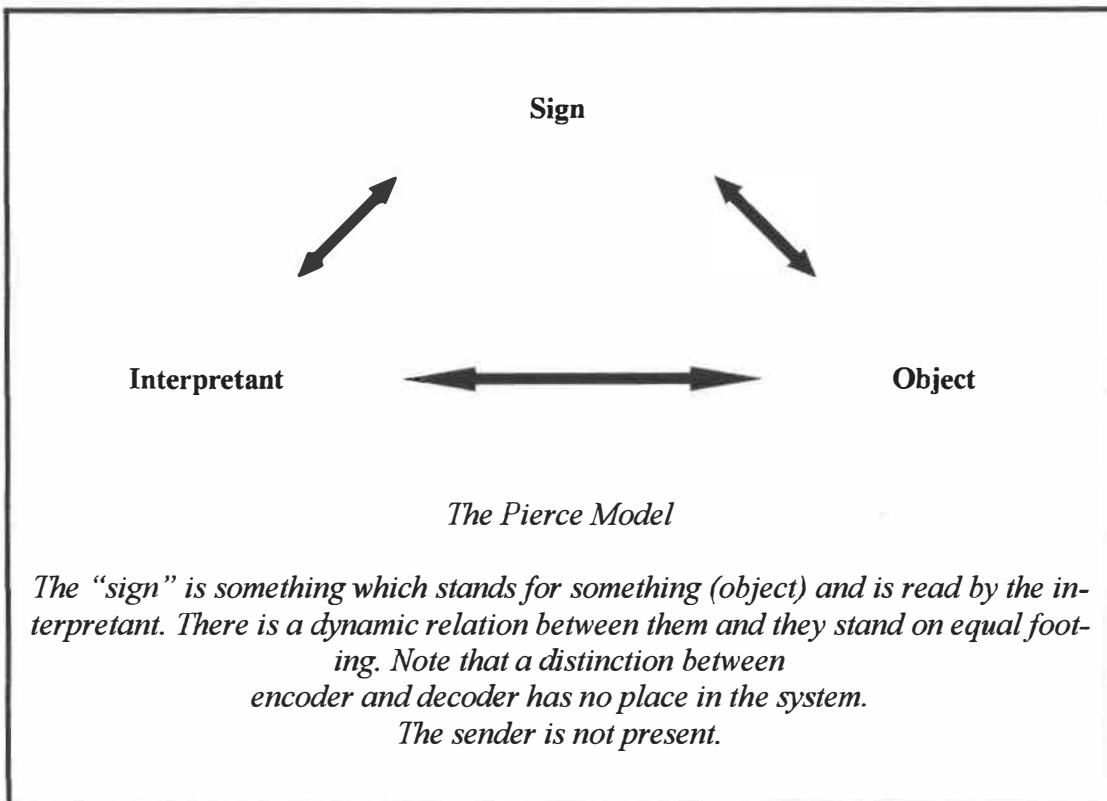
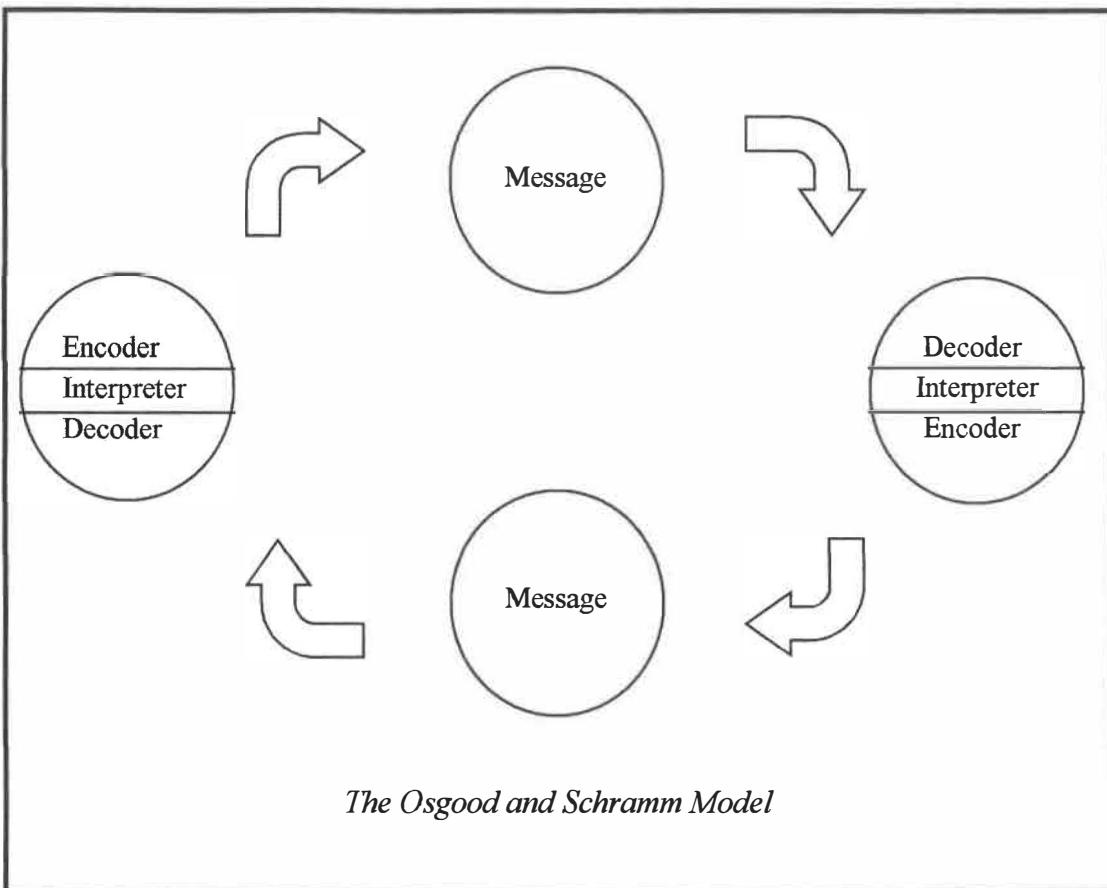
Info. Source —> Transmitter —> —> Receiver —> Destination



Noise Source

The Shannon and Weaver Model (1949)

It is a linear model but has added noise in the channel and is more sophisticated than the Laswell Model.



APPENDIX D

SERMON: “WHAT’S UP?” WITH VISUALS

2 Samuel 6:12-19

*page 280
Old Testament*

King David brings the Ark of the Covenant
into the City of David and dances before it.

(Read text.)

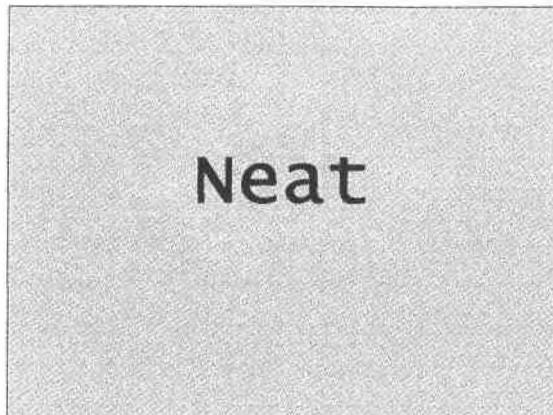
whazzup ?

We have many one word phrases in the
United States.

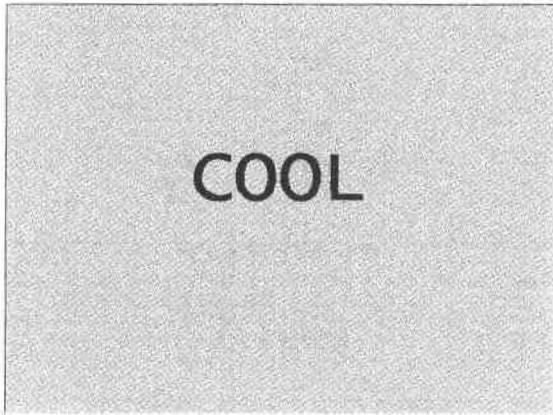
They are phrases with one word, but they
mean a whole paragraph.

**what's
happening?**

This one is a little older.



This phrase was in my generation.

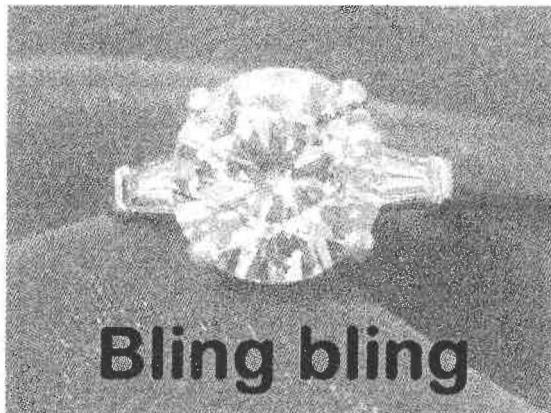


This was used before my time. Some of you
may remember this one.

Dyn-o-mite!



This was a famous saying in the seventies on
TV by JJ Walker.



This is one of the most recent. What does this mean? (wait for response)

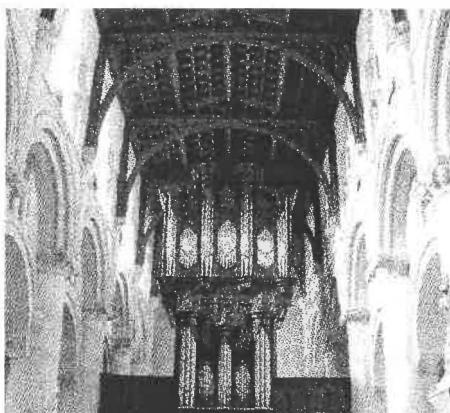
Answer: Shiny jewelry. Usually a lot of it.



Has anyone heard of this one?

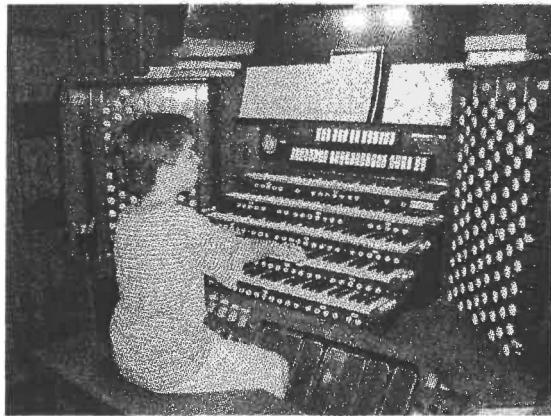
Example: Let's have a party and pull out all of the stops.

Definition: as best we can



Originally this term was used for testing the pipe organs. They pulled out all of the stops to test the air pressure.

(Listen to organ music) (smile contentedly)



The stops are all of the white knobs on each side.

But there was trouble when the organ came into the church.

It replaced something else.



It was the chant – not the organ. The pipe organ has not always been in the church..

And people were upset that the organ replaced the chant.

(Listen to chant music)



And today we have new music from people such as Rich Mullins.

(listen to "Awesome God and show words")

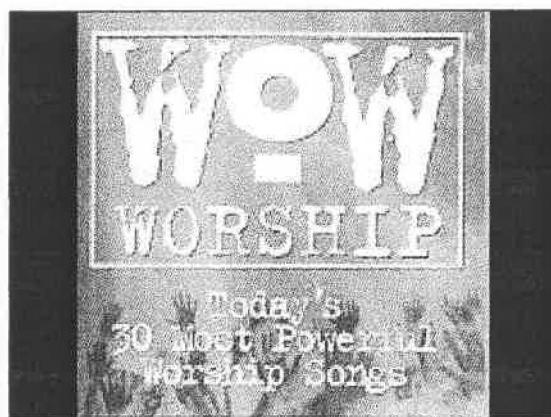
Awesome God
 When he rolls up his sleeves
 He ain't just putting on the ritz
 Our God is an awesome God
 There is thunder in his footsteps and
 lightning in His fists
 Our God is an awesome God

The Lord wasn't joking
 when he kicked them out of Eden
 It wasn't for no reason
 That He shed His blood
 His return is very close
 And so you had better be
 believing that
 Our God is an awesome God

Awesome God
 Chorus:

Our God is an awesome God,
 He reigns from Heaven
 above,
 with wisdom, power, and
 love,
 Our God is an awesome God!

That was nothing compared to this.

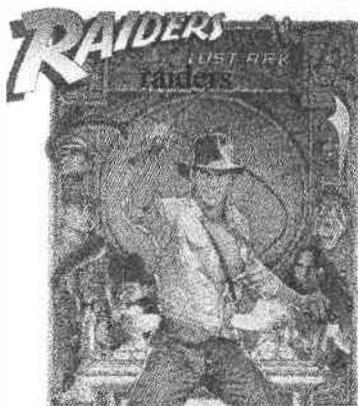


(Listen to very modern Christian music.)



In today's text, something like that was happening.

The King was dancing in the street before the ark.



You know, the Ark of the Covenant as in this film.



The Ark of the Covenant was where God was thought to be. And David was dancing in front of it.

And his wife, Michal, came out to meet him and said, "How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, disrobing in the sight of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!"

(expand on this)

She was not happy! Just as some are not happy with new music or video projectors in the sanctuary

(expand on this)

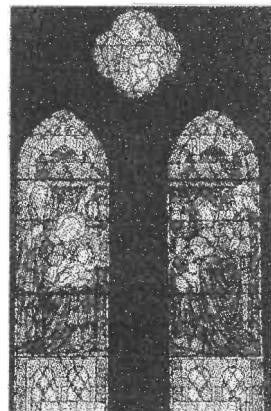
Agreement on essentials Charity on all others

John Wesley



John Wesley said it this way.

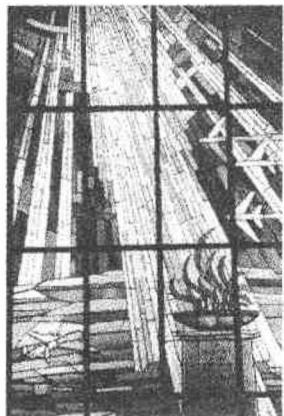
Types of music and projector equipment are
not essentials.



Churches have been using visuals for a long
time – stained glass windows.

Some classic.

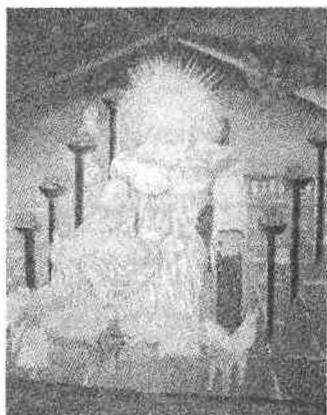




Some modern.



Even Jesus on the cross is a visual for us.



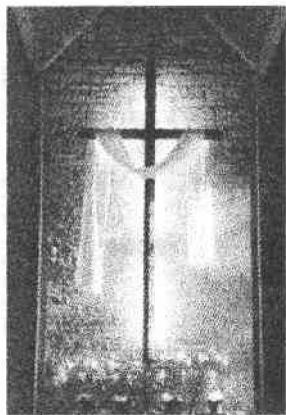
The Book of Revelation has many visions and visual descriptions for us.



The crucifix is a visual.

It is really a killing machine used in ancient times, but for us today, it is a visual reminder of our salvation.

(This is an animated slide with the lightening moving.)



They are in all of our Christian churches.



Even the picture of Jesus most of us grew up with is a visual.



But Paul reminds us not to take our way and preferences too far.

We are to temper our wants and desires so as to not hinder others from their beliefs in Christ.

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble.

It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.

Romans 14:19-21

He says it this way using this example.



So, no matter what we do or want, let us remember to do it with love for others and not ourselves.

(This is an animated slide with the little hearts moving.)

APPENDIX E

SERMON: “STRESS” WITH VISUALS

Matt 2:13-21



Today's text is about the Flight to Egypt by Joseph, Mary, and baby Jesus.

Stress

Let's talk about stress today.

Stress Reduction Kit



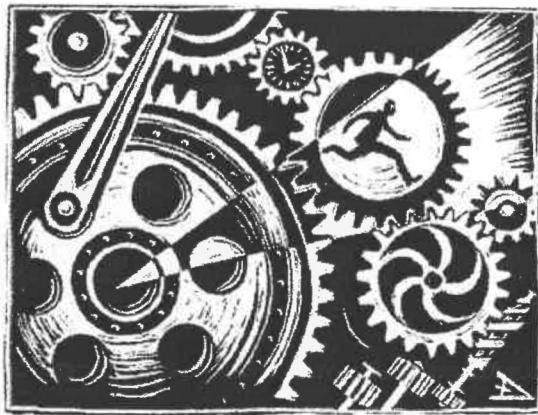
Directions:

1. Place kit on FIRM surface.
2. Follow directions in circle of kit.
3. Repeat step 2 as necessary, or until unconscious.
4. If unconscious, cease stress reduction activity.

Maybe you feel like this some days.



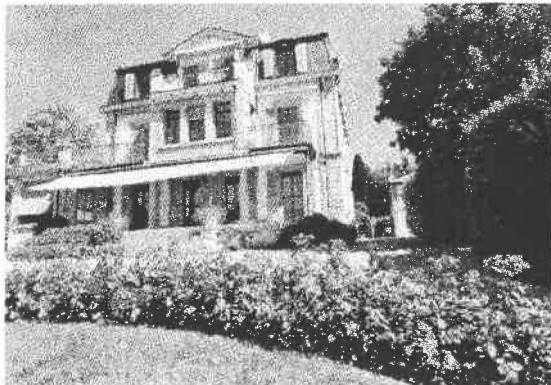
Maybe you stress about money?



Or stress about time



Or does your job stress you out?

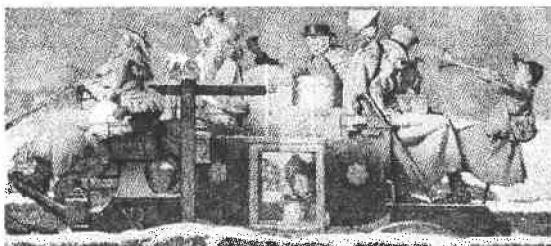


Maybe you are **stressing** over the
house you have or the house you
want?
Bigger?



Maybe you want that red fast sports
car?

Or is yours barely running/



Do you travel in your job?
Is that your stressor?



Is your weight your stressor?
Did you eat too much over
Christmas?



Maybe you felt like this?

STRESS!

Mary

Today's text is also about stress. Let us look at it from Mary's perspective, the mother of Jesus.



She had the stress of an angel visiting her.
Stress of an unexplained pregnancy.
The stress of becoming God's mother.



Mary had the stress of having her
baby born in a barn.



Others also had stress at that first
Christmas.
The shepherds.
They had a whole bunch of angels
visit them.



And then we have the three rich guys from the east visit the holy family.



But one of the biggest stressors for this family was the edict by King Herod. “Kill all the male babies!”

**Here I am,
the servant
of the Lord**



And so our families travel to Egypt
That was a lot of stress.

But they managed because they said
yes to God.
Here I am, Lord.
(*Expand on this.*)



So when ~~stressors~~ come in our life.
We can be sure God is with us
Because we said yes
We trust God.
Even during natural disasters like a
tornado.



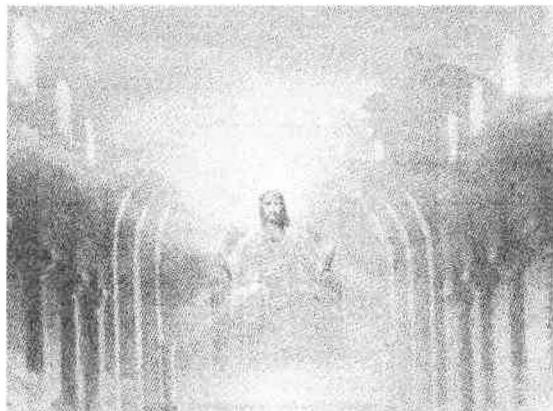
A flood



During illness



Or even DEATH!



Because we trust Jesus.

Our lord and savior

*(Leave picture on
So it can sink in)*

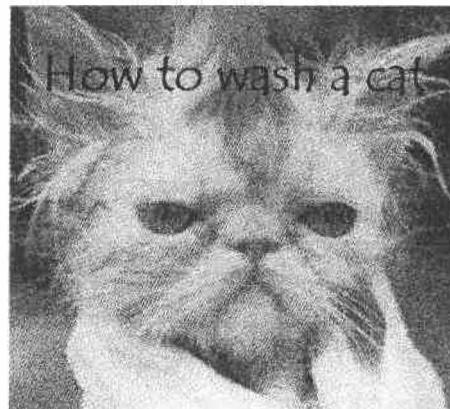
APPENDIX F

SERMON: "HOW TO WASH A CAT" WITH VISUALS

John 14: 15-21
in Farewell Discourse

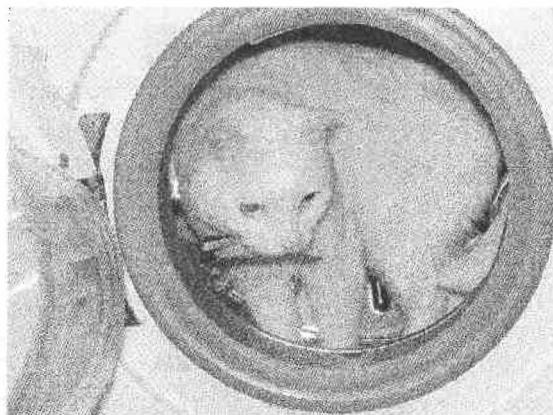


Today's text is taken from Jesus' farewell discourse on that last Thursday he was together with his apostles.



Let's talk about how to wash a cat.

(read "How to Wash a Cat")



There are even machines on the market to do this automatically. The cost is about \$5,000.



Some people act like cats trying to be washed
while others tend to be like puppy dogs.



In today's text, we hear Jesus promising to
send the Holy Spirit which he does as
recorded on the Day of Pentecost.

All believers receive the Holy Spirit.

And we receivers are to be like dogs.



Let us call it dogness.

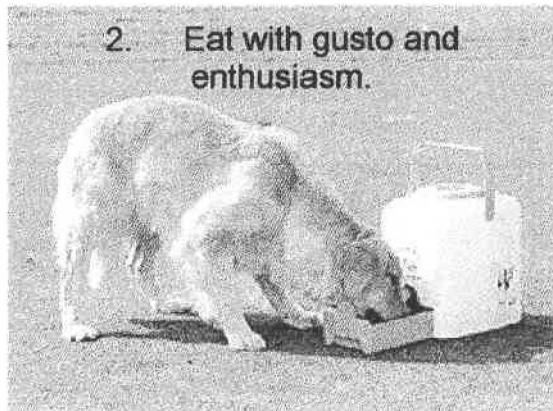
How do dogs act?

Here are some ways
(used from *Homiletics*, May-June 2002)



1. Greet loved ones with wagging tail.

- 1. Greet loved ones with wagging tail.**
Nothing is more important than feeling loved, and there's no creature on the planet that does it better than a dog. The wagging tail affirms that this is where we belong: This is our home, where we live, where we're safe and where we're loved.



2. Eat with gusto and enthusiasm.

- 2. Eat with gusto and enthusiasm.** You know how dogs eat: slobber flying everywhere, and licking the dish clean until every last scent of gravy is gone. Dogs know that eating is a celebration of life. Breaking bread together is holy. To nourish the body is not a chore, but a sacrament. Animosities are dissipated at meals, barriers broken down, friendships renewed and strengthened. So, eat with gusto. Enjoy all the flavors and spices of creation.



3. On hot days, drink lots of water and lie under a shady tree.

- 3. On hot days, drink lots of water and lie under a shady tree.** Relax, slow down and enjoy. Give yourself a time out. Opt out, unplug, and get lazy.



4. Run, romp and play daily. Physical exercise is as important for the soul as it is for the body. No disciple of Christ can be as faithful and effective when the body is run down and health is unnecessarily poor. When we learn how to play and stretch and get in some exercise we'll feel better from the inside out.



5. Be loyal. Loyalty is a good thing, and if your dog is nothing else, he is loyal to a fault. Loyalty has fallen on hard times. Loyalty is a critical element of discipleship, for it speaks to our relationship with others: our spouse, our vocation, our community and our friends.



6. When you're happy, dance around and wag your tail.

6. When you're happy, dance around and wag your tail. Thankfulness and celebration are powerful dynamics for successful and healthy living. Gratitude is a gift we give ourselves that enables us to affirm the essential goodness of life. Even when adversity strikes, gratitude helps us maintain our perspective and carries us through the low moments.



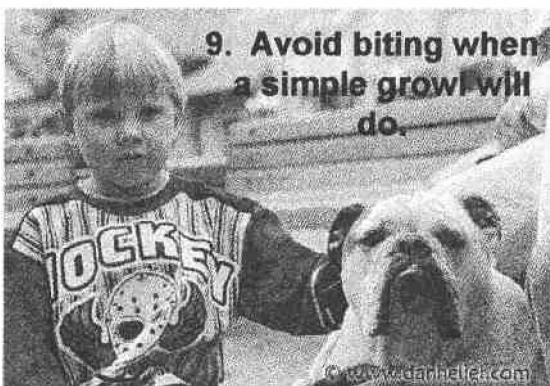
7. If someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by and nuzzle gently.

7. If someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by and nuzzle gently. We all have bad days. That's why we need encouragement and affirmation. When we are depressed, we know that it takes only a quiet word, a gentle touch to bring us around. A dog has this instinct that tells it when to be dancing and jumping around and when to just be there beside you. Words are not always needed, or even helpful, to convey empathy. A gentle nuzzle will do.



8. No matter how harshly you're scolded, don't pout - run back and make friends.

8. No matter how harshly you're scolded, don't pout - run back and make friends. Carrying grudges makes life a drudgery. Make friends and keep them. Overlook faults and assume the best. Don't keep a scorecard of rights and wrongs. Don't take offense.



9. Avoid biting when a simple growl will do.

9. Avoid biting when a simple growl will do. We do not need to injure others by what we say or do. We can be strong with love; firm with kindness.



10. Bark with your buddies.

10. Bark with your buddies. Barking is an act of commonality. Barking says we belong in this together. We are one.



The patient, whom we'll call Hazel, entered UCLA Medical Center for quadruple-bypass surgery. Since being moved into ICU, she had barely moved, or even opened her eyes. It had been days now, and volunteer Betty Walsh was getting concerned. The situation was getting desperate. She decided to call in a member of the canine candy-stripers corps.

The new staffer, a pet-partner, if you will, arrived moments later. Koyla, a 145-pound shaggy white Great Pyrenees, crawled right up on Hazel's hospital bed and snuggled in beside her. There she lay beside her patient, nuzzling her warm and furry body in next to Hazel, who hadn't twitched a muscle for days. Betty and the other nurses gathered around to watch, tense and concerned.

Then, they detected movement. Hazel's hand came alive. It wasn't long until her hand was inching toward the dog. She began to stroke its fur. Within minutes she was smiling and talking, calling the huge dog her friend.

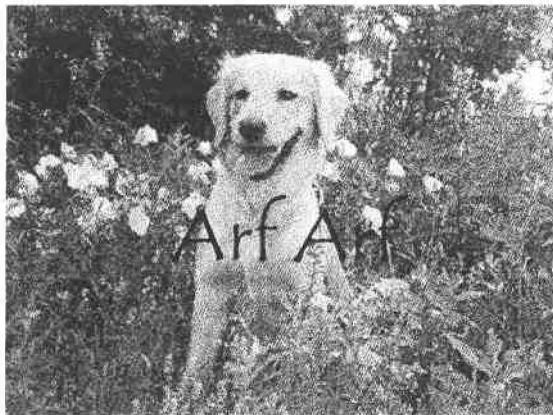
Betty stood close by and monitored her vital signs. The blood pressure monitor began to go down, down, down to normal levels.



Be a dog.

Be a dog. Have dogness. Let the Holy Spirit let you love as Jesus told us so many years ago.

(Expand this)

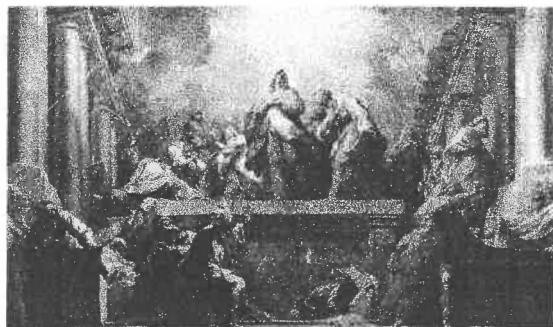


Be a dog

Arf Arf

APPENDIX G

SERMON: “CROSSTRAINING” WITH VISUALS



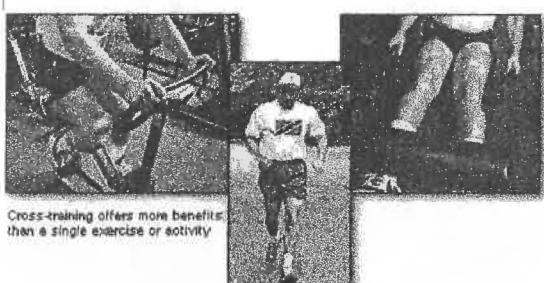
Acts 2:42-47

This morning's reading will be from Acts 2:42-47 where we are shown the practices of the early church and its result.

This is immediately following the description of the day of Pentecost.



Let's talk this morning about crosstraining in sports.

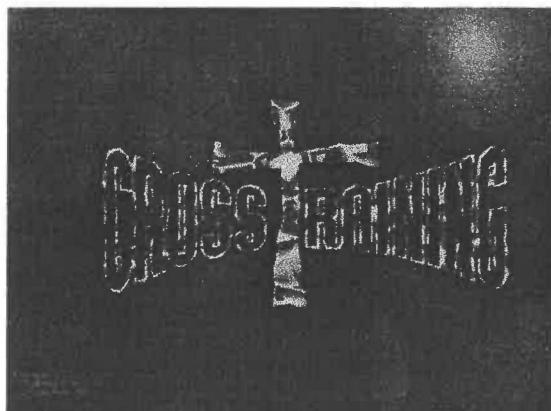


This is where athletes of one sport train in another sport to help them in their chosen field.

Such as football players partaking of ballet.



Even for us common folk, they make crosstraining shoes so we can participate in many sports with one pair of shoes.



But there is also another kind of cross training. Since this is the beginning of lent, let us talk about that too.



It begins with the day of Pentecost where the believers are gathered and...

- 42. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

And our text tells us what they did as an early church.

We can learn from their ways.

- 42. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching ***didache***, and to the fellowship ***koinonia***, to the breaking of bread ***martyria*** and to prayer ***kerygma***.

Charles Van Engen's mission-oriented book, *God's Missionary People: Rethinking the Purpose of the Local Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1991) also recognizes the existence of distinctive marks present in an enthusiastic cross-training church today.

Let us look at each key word in the Greek.

apostles' teaching ***didache***



Whereas Luke first mentions didache, teaching, Van Engen's category broadens somewhat to diakonia, service. Teaching and service share a common circulatory system in the church. The old saw, "Those who can, do, those who can't, teach," has never been less true than in the church. The first teachers Luke identifies are the apostles themselves. Their teachers, of course, were none other than Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Few would accuse any of the apostles of not being "do-ers." Van Engen defines this call to teaching and doing as twin components to the church's call to service. "As servants," Van Engen declares, "they are judged by what they did or did not do for those in their world who were obviously in need." One of the marks of the church is that those who teach

Fellowship *koinonia*



breaking of bread *martyria*



The second mark Acts notes is fellowship, *koinonia*. This is the church's ability to incarnate the command to "love one another." As Acts implies this kind of love is unique within the Christian community. It is "the love which the Father showed in sending the Son, the love which the Son showed in laying down his life" (Charles H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953], 405).

They had fellowship together

Christianity and religion are not private undertakings, but they are primarily community events.

Along with service and fellowship, Van Engen cites a purpose foreign to our postmodern faith communities. Very few of us consider our membership in church to be costly in anyway, whether financially or psychologically. Sure we give up sleeping late on Sunday morning. Sure we give up a certain percentage of our disposable income. But we rarely consider the possibility that our faith may some day demand our life.

Unless you are served by a really bad cook, you probably do not normally associate eating with others as a form of *martyria*. Yet it is as witnesses to Christ's pervasive love that the church breaks bread together. This was probably Jesus' favorite way to witness to the radically inclusive nature of the church.

Being at table with the "other" and "outsider" demonstrates to the world how all humans share the essentials of body and spirit. Both must be fed and nurtured in order to remain healthy.

Prayer

kerygma



Perhaps the most basic exercise of faith that helped to keep the early church fit for its witnessing mission was its communal commitment to prayer. In prayer the church could confess the *kerygma* vital to its identity, "Jesus is Lord."

TITHING

- 44. All the believers were together and had everything in common.
- 45. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.

Tithing is another form of discipline.

It literally means 10 % of your income
(before taxes)

This Lenten season, maybe you could try this?

WORSHIP

- 46. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts.

Worship is also a community act.

It was key in the early church, and your presence here is vitally important as well.

Maybe this Lent, you should commit to attend every week if you do not already.

GATHERING

- 47. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.

The early church also gathered in homes.

Some of your best friends could be made from your church.

RESULT

- 43. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.

- The result was miraculous.
- Miracles did not stop 2000 years ago.

RESULT

- And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved

And the church grew.

Will this church grow if we cross train and discipline ourselves this Lenten season.

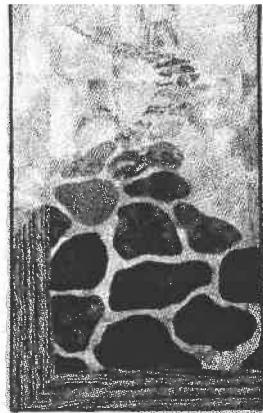
Answer: Probably!



So this is the beginning of Lent

What are you going to do?

Lenten journey



It is a journey, and not a destination.

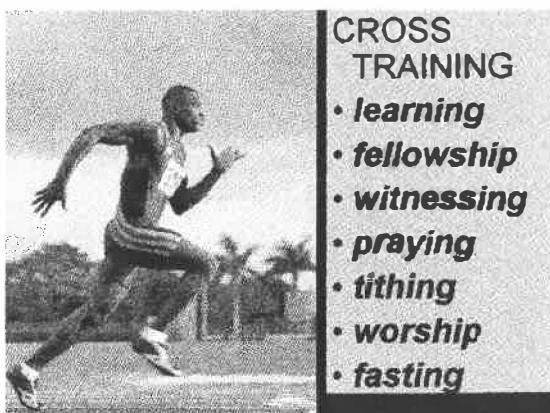
If you choose a particular discipline, and fall off the wagon. That OK. Try again tomorrow. Keep at your task.



Maybe you will **try** fasting this year.

Giving up something, or you could add something.

Lent is the 40 days before Easter, but not counting the Sundays. You can break the fast on Sunday. Go ahead and eat the broccoli.



What are going to do this Lent?

What discipline will you try?

You will be amazed at the result.

It will help freshen the Spirit within you and the church.



Spirit in church

This is your church.

Will you help it, and God's Kingdom, as those did in the first church.

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